

A HISTORY
OF THE
LATER ROMAN EMPIRE
FROM ARCADIUS TO IRENE
(395 A.D. TO 800 A.D.)

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VOL. I

London
MACMILLAN AND CO.
AND NEW YORK
1889

12. 1. 21.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BOOK I

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

CHRISTIANITY AND PAGANISM

Transitional period of history—Greek *destiny* and christian *consolation*—Historical connection of Christianity with the past—Stoicism—Epicureanism—Decay of paganism—Attitude of christians to pagans—Legends of Cyprian and Macarius—Neoplatonism—Proclus Pages 1-16 ✓

CHAPTER II

INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY ON SOCIETY

Christianity and the Teutons—Attractions of Christianity—Anchorets and monks—Position of women—Value of human life—Fraternity of mankind—Altruism—Sin 17-24 ✓

CHAPTER III

ELEMENTS OF DISINTEGRATION IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

Depopulation—Slave system—Fiscal and curial systems—Serfdom and colonatus—Reforms of Majorian—Germans in the Empire—*Semibarbari*—Christianity as a disintegrating force—Survey 25-36

CHAPTER IV

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE EMPIRE

System of Diocletian—The senate and senators—Official titles—Change in nomenclature in the fourth century—Taxes—Grades of society—Praetorian prefects—Other ministers—Civil service—Education—Army . . . Pages 37-49

CHAPTER V

CONSTANTINOPLE

Choice of Constantine—Description 50-58

BOOK II

THE HOUSE OF THEODOSIUS

CHAPTER I

RUFINUS AND EUTROPIUS

Death of Theodosius I.—Arcadius—Rufinus—Stilicho—The Visigoths—Claudian—Huns in Syria—Eutropius—Revolt of Gildo 61-78

CHAPTER II

THE GERMANS IN THE EAST

Three parties at Constantinople—Aurelian—"Typhos"—Synesius—Revolt of Tribigild—Gainas—Fall of Eutropius—Danger from the Goths . . . 79-90

CHAPTER III

JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

Court of Eudoxia—Chrysostom and his friends—His visit to Asia Minor—Theophilus—Monks of Nitria—Epiphanius—Synod of the Oak—Conflagration of St. Sophia—Chrysostom banished—St. Nilus—Byzantine Patriarchs—Relations of Old and New Rome—Death of Arcadius 91-106

CHAPTER IV ✓

STILICHO AND ALARIC

Relations of Germans to the Empire—Visigoths in Italy—Battle of Pollentia—
—Radagaisus—Relations of Stilicho and Alaric—Movements in Gaul—Death
of Stilicho—Visigoths again in Italy—Alaric at Rome—Attalus—Death of
Alaric Pages 107-122

CHAPTER V

THEODOSIUS II AND MARCIAN

Anthemius—Pulcheria—Athenais—Significance of reign of the younger Theodosius
—Cyrus the prefect—University of Constantinople—*Codex Theodosianus*—
Eudocia in Palestine—Her fall—Chrysaphius—Reign of Marcian. 123-136

CHAPTER VI

BEGINNINGS OF THE DISMEMBERMENT OF THE EMPIRE

Barbarians in Gaul—Tyrants in Gaul—Constantine at Arelate—He wins Spain—
Gerontius—Fall of the tyrants—Jovinus and Athaulf—Revolt of Heraclian—
Visigoths in Gaul—Wallia—Constantius—Vandals and Suevians in Spain
—Lands assigned to Visigoths and Burgundians—Local government in
southern Gaul—Death of Constantius III—Placidia—Boniface—Death of
Honorius—John the tyrant suppressed and Valentinian III proclaimed—
Aetius 137-160

CHAPTER VII ✓

INVASIONS OF THE HUNS

Rise of the Hun power—Relations with Vandals—Attila invades the Empire—
Asemus—Peace of Anatolius—The Hun empire 161-166

CHAPTER VIII

THE PATRICIAN AETIUS

Africa—Boniface and Aetius—The Vandals—Burgundians and Alemanni—Theo-
doric the Visigoth—Aetius—Honorius—Attila—Battle of the Catalaunian
Field—Huns take Aquileia—Death of Attila—Deaths of Aetius and Valen-
tinian 167-183

CHAPTER IX

THE CHURCH IN THE FIFTH CENTURY

Relations of Church and State—Arian controversy—Christological problems—Nestorianism—Monophysitism—Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon—Henotikon—Great schism—Donatism—Pelagianism—St. Augustine, Pages 184-196

CHAPTER X

LIFE AND MANNERS IN THE FIFTH CENTURY

Luxury of court and higher classes—Amusements—Relation of the visit of Porphyrius of Gaza to Byzantium—Paganism at Gaza—Birth and baptism of Theodosius II—Anthemius, a typical educated Byzantine—Alexandria—Hypatia—Antioch 197-212

CHAPTER XI

A GLIMPSE OF HUN LIFE

Embassy of Maximin to court of Attila, as related by his friend Priscus, 213-223

BOOK III

THE HOUSE OF LEO THE GREAT

CHAPTER I

LEO I

Theory of imperial succession—Aspar—Isaurians in army—Fall of Aspar—Policy and character of Leo—Loss of Jotaba—Great fire in Constantinople—Paganism—Death of Leo 227-233

CHAPTER II

RICIMER THE PATRICIAN

✓ Maximus—Gaiseric in Italy—Avitus—Ricimer—Majorian—Severus—Count Marcellinus—Claims of Gaiseric—Anthemius—Great expedition of Leo against Vandals—Fall of Anthemius—Olybrius—Death of Ricimer . 234-249

CHAPTER III

ZENO

Leo II—Reign of Basiliscus—Restoration of Zeno—Great fire in Constantinople—Character and policy of Zeno—Harmatius—Illus—Verina—Revolt of Leontius and Illus—Pamphilius—Zeno's son—Death of Zeno, Pages 250-260

CHAPTER IV

THE OSTROGOTHS IN ILLYRICUM AND THRACE

Battle of Netad—Theodoric, son of Theodemir—Theodoric, son of Triarius—Alliance of Zeno with son of Theodemir—Alliance of two Theodorics—Alliance of Zeno and son of Triarius—Son of Theodemir in Epirus—Adamantius—Bulgarians 261-273

CHAPTER V

ODOVACAR THE PATRICIAN AND THEODORIC THE PATRICIAN

Glycerius—Julius Nepos—Euric—Orestes—Romulus Augustulus—Odovacar—So-called "Fall of Western Empire"—Odovacar, the successor of Merobaudes—Fall of Odovacar's kingdom and Theodoric in Italy—The Franks—Chlodwig—European geography in 500 A.D.—St. Severinus 274-289

CHAPTER VI

ANASTASIUS I

Anastasius—Isaurian war—Bulgarian invasions—The Long Wall—Recovery of Jotaba—Unpopularity of Anastasius—Revolt of Vitalian—Character of Anastasius—Chrysargyron—Marinus—Death of Anastasius 290-308

CHAPTER VII

THE PERSIAN WAR

The Sassanid dynasty—Isdigerd I. and Arcadius—War in 420-421 A.D.—Ephthalite Huns (Viddhal)—Perozes—Kobad—Mazdak, the communist—The war breaks out 502 A.D.—Siege of Amida—Amida recovered—Peace—Foundation of Anastasiopolis (Daras) 304-309

CHAPTER VIII

GREEK LITERATURE OF THE FIFTH CENTURY

Decadence of literature—Influence of Christianity—Want of ideas and originality—Julian—Synesius—Proclus—Athens—Alexandria—Hypatia—Nonnus—*Christus Patiens*—Egyptian school of poetry—The romance—*Daphnis and Chloe*—Heliodorus—Achilles Tatius—Xenophon of Ephesus—History—Eunapius—Zosimus—Olympiodorus—Priscus—Malchus—Candidus—Latin literature—Claudian—Sidonius—Christian poetry. Pages 310-330

BOOK IV

THE HOUSE OF JUSTIN

PART I

THE AGE OF JUSTINIAN

CHAPTER I

THE REIGN OF JUSTIN I ; AND THE EARLIER YEARS OF
JUSTINIAN'S REIGN

The sixth century—Reaction against Anastasius—Accession of Justinian—John of Cappadocia—Theodora—The Blues and Greens—Sedition of *Nika*—Fall of John of Cappadocia—Absolutism of Justinian—*Praetores plebis*—*Quaestor*—Imperial style 333-350

CHAPTER II

JUSTINIAN AND THEODORA

Historical position of Justinian ; his connection with the past and with the future—His artificial system—The *Secret History*—Johannes Lydus—The Empress Theodora—Character of Justinian 351-358

Appendix on the *Secret History* attributed to Procopius 359-364

CHAPTER III

THE LEGAL WORKS OF JUSTINIAN

Codex—Digest—Institutes—Pythagoreanism—Roman law modified by history—
Slavery Pages 365-371

CHAPTER IV

FIRST PERSIAN WAR (528-532 A.D.)

Kobad and Justin—Outbreak of war—Battle of Daras—Battle of Callinicum—
The endless peace 372-380

CHAPTER V

THE RECONQUEST OF AFRICA AND ITALY

Ostrogothic kingdom — Theodoric — Amalasuntha — Vandalic war — Events in
Africa after the Imperial Restoration—Gothic war—Conquest of Sicily and
Dalmatia—Siege of Naples—Siege of Rome by the Goths—Siege and relief
of Ariminum—Conquest of Milan and Liguria—Surrender of Faesulae and
Auximum—Fall of Ravenna—Attitude of the Franks—St. Benedict, 381-698

CHAPTER VI

THE GREAT PLAGUE

Significance of plagues—The account of Procopius 399-403

CHAPTER VII

THE FINAL CONQUEST OF ITALY AND THE CONQUEST OF SOUTH-EASTERN SPAIN

Ildibad—The logothetes—Totila—Gothic power revives—Belisarius arrives in
Italy—John, the nephew of Vitalian—Second siege of Rome—Belisarius at
Portus—Policy of Totila—Recall of Belisarius—Third siege of Rome—Ger-
manus—Narses—Defeat of Totila—Teias—Alemanni in Italy—Imperial
conquest in south-eastern Spain—Reconquest by Visigoths 404-417

CHAPTER VIII

SECOND PERSIAN WAR (540-545 A.D.)

Saracens of Hirah and Ghassan—Causes of war and fears of Chosroes—Chosroes invades Syria (540 A.D.)—He invades Colchis (541 A.D.)—Invades Commagene (542 A.D.)—Romans invade Persarmenia—Chosroes invades Mesopotamia—Siege of Edessa—Peace of 545 A.D. . . . Pages 418-440

CHAPTER IX

THE LAZIC WAR (549-556 A.D.)

Gobazes seeks protection of Justinian—Dagisthaeus besieges Petra—Revolt of the Abasgians—Apsilia—Bessas besieges and takes Petra—Persian siege of Archæopolis—The Island—Assassination of Gobazes—Trial of his assassins—Wiscard—Siege of Phasis—Expedition against the Misimiani—Peace of 562 A.D. . . . 441-468

CHAPTER X

THE LATER YEARS OF JUSTINIAN'S REIGN

Justinian's imperial policy—Homerites—Heruls—Tetraxite Goths—Second period of the reign—Decay of the army—Silkworms brought to Europe—Buildings—Earthquakes—Conspiracy of Artabanes—Cotrigur and Utrigur Huns—Invasion of Zabergan—Last days of Belisarius—Death of Justinian, 469-482

CHAPTER VII

INVASIONS OF THE HUNS

IN 441 A.D. the realm of Theodosius was in danger from a powerful combination. It was involved in war with three powers, the Huns, Vandals, and Persians,¹ at the same time, and at least two of them, the Huns and Vandals, were in league.

The rise of the great Hunnic power, which threatened European civilisation in the fifth century, was as sudden and rapid as its fall. The Huns had gradually advanced from their Caucasian abodes, pressing westward the Goths who lined the north shores of the Black Sea, and had now become a great power. Attila, their king, ruled over a European empire stretching from the Don to Pannonia, and including many barbarian kingdoms. In 395 Asia Minor and Syria had been ravaged by Huns entering by the north-east passes, but in 400 we find Uldes, a king of other Huns, hovering on the shores of the Danube and putting Gainas to death. At the beginning of Theodosius' reign the Romans gained a victory over this Uldes, and followed up the success by defensive precautions. The strong cities in Illyricum were fortified, and new walls were built to protect Byzantium; the fleet on the Danube was increased and improved. But a payment of money was a more effectual barrier against the barbarians than walls, and about 424 Theodosius consented to pay 350 lbs. of gold to Rugila or Rua, king of the Huns, who had established himself in the land which is now Hungary, and to whom, about 433, the western government conceded a part of

¹ The relations of the Persian kingdom to the Empire during the fifth century may be more conveniently resumed in another place. With two

short interruptions in the reign of Theodosius, an unbroken peace prevailed until the reign of Anastasius. (*See below, Bk. iii. cap. vii.*)

Pannonia. It was to Rugila probably, that Aetius, afterwards to be the terror of Huns, was sent as a hostage; and it was he who supplied Aetius with the auxiliaries for the support of the tyrant John.¹ When Rugila died in 434 his nephews Attila and Bleda,² the sons of Mundiuch, succeeded him, and a new treaty was contracted by which the payment was doubled.³

Attila cherished friendly relations with Aetius, the general of Valentinian, and entered into an alliance with Gaiseric, king of the Vandals, who had passed from Spain into Africa in 429 and established themselves there, as will be related in another chapter. The movements of Attila from 434 to 441 are lost to us, but at the latter date we find him ruler over an enormous barbaric empire in central Europe, which stretched to the Caucasian mountains on the east, threatening the provinces of Theodosius. At the same time the forces of the East were required against the Vandals and the Persians; and it has been suspected that the hostilities of the latter were not uninfluenced by the Huns, as the hostilities of Attila were certainly influenced by the movements of Gaiseric.

The Vandals were unique among the German nations by the fact that they maintained a fleet, so that they were able to afflict the eastern as well as the western lands of the Mediterranean, and to make piratical raids on the coasts of Greece; it was even thought advisable to fortify the shore and harbours of Constantinople against a possible Vandal expedition. The security of traders and commercial interests demanded that an attempt should be made to suppress this evil, and a large armament, whose numbers have perhaps been exaggerated, was fitted out by Theodosius, and placed under the command of Areobindus.⁴ It was despatched to Sicily to operate against Gaiseric, who had taken Lilybaeum and was besieging Pan-

¹ Priscus, fr. 1. On all matters relating to the Huns and their relations with the Empire Priscus is our chief and best-informed authority. 350 lbs. = £15,750, or rather more.

² There is a difficulty as to which was the elder. It seems more probable that Bleda was older than Attila; cf. Prosper Tiro (eleventh year of Theodosius). *Rugila rex Chunnorum, cum quo pax firmata, moritur cui Bleda successit.* He at least thought that Bleda succeeded Rugila, and Attila Bleda. The

spelling *Bdella* in Theophanes perhaps preserves an unkind Greek pun.

³ Priscus, fr. 1, where the meeting of the Roman ambassadors with the Huns at Margus-Constantia is described.

⁴ Theophanes, 5941 A.M. Other generals were Anaxilla, Arintheus, Germanus, and Inobind. The number of ships, which included private vessels and corn transports, is given by Theophanes as 1100, which has a suspicious resemblance to the number of Leo's great armada in 468 A.D.

ormus ; but tidings of some dark danger which threatened him in Africa induced the friend of pirates to make a truce with the Roman general and hurry back to his kingdom. The danger came from a son-in-law of Boniface, the famous Sebastian, who died as a martyr and became a favourite subject with Italian painters ; but how his passage into Mauretania, of which Prosper tells us, menaced Gaiseric is not clear. From a fragment, attributed to John of Antioch and preserved by Suidas,¹ it would seem that he was the commander of a pirate crew which served the Emperor Theodosius ; and so we might suspect that his invasion of Mauretania was closely connected with the Sicilian expedition.

Most of the military forces which had not accompanied Areobindus to the West accompanied Anatolius and Aspar to the East. What happened there is not recorded clearly, but the hostilities were of short duration and slight importance.²

At this moment Attila determined to invade the Empire. It was destined that he, like Alaric the Visigoth at an earlier, and Theodoric the Ostrogoth at a later time, should desolate the provinces of the East before he turned to the West. He condescended to allege a cause for his invasion ; he complained of the irregular payment of tribute, and that deserters had not been restored ; but the government at Constantinople disregarded his embassy.³ Then Attila, who had advanced towards the Danube from his home, which was somewhere on the Theiss, laid siege to the city of Ratiaria, an important town on the Ister in Dacia ripensis. Here ambassadors arrived from New Rome to remonstrate with the Huns for breaking the peace, and the invader replied to their complaints by alleging that the bishop of Margus had entered Hunnic territory and robbed treasures from the tombs of their kings ; the surrender of these treasures and of deserters was demanded as the condition of peace. The negotiations were futile, and, having

¹ Fr. 194, ed. Müller. The Mediterranean at this time was infested by pirates, who seem to have been encouraged by Gaiseric. In 438 a pirate chief, Coteadis, was caught and executed (Marcellinus *ad ann.*) In 440, it may be noticed here, an ancestor of Cassiodorus won glory by opposing Gaiseric in Sicily (*Variae*, i. 4).

sion of Roman territory by the Persians with Saracen and Tzanic auxiliaries (Marcellinus).

³ I have followed Güldenpenning in his transposition of the second and third frag. of Priscus, which seems very reasonable ; and he is evidently right in placing the capture of Naissus (fr. 1^b) after the capture of Viminacium, etc. (fr. 2).

² The cause of the war was the inva-

captured Ratiaria, the Hunnic horsemen rode up the course of the Ister and took the great towns which are situated on its banks. Viminacium and Singidunum, in Upper Moesia, were overwhelmed in the onslaught of the "Scythian shepherds," and it seems that the friendship of Attila with Aetius did not preserve the town of Sirmium in Lower Pannonia from being stormed. The town of Margus, which faces Constantia on the opposite side of the river, fell by treachery; the same bishop whom Attila accused of robbing tombs incurred the eternal disgrace of betraying a Roman town and its christian inhabitants to the greed and cruelty of the heathen destroyer. The invaders advanced up the valley of the Margus, now called the Morawa, and halted before the walls of Naissus, now called Nisch, in the province of Dardania—the city which had been strengthened and improved by the affection of the great Constantine, and which had recently given to the Empire a Third Constantius. The inhabitants made a brave defence, but the place fell before the machines of Attila and the missiles of a countless host. Then the victors passed south-eastward through narrow defiles into Thrace and penetrated to the neighbourhood of Constantinople. Attila was not to lay siege to New Rome, just as ten years later when he invaded Italy he was not to lay siege to Old Rome; but he took Philippopolis and Arcadiopolis, and a fort named Athyras, not far from the Bosphorus.¹

If the nameless bishop of Margus is branded with infamy for his recreant Hunnism, the name of the strong fortress of Aseumus in Lower Moesia deserves to be handed down by history in golden letters for its brave and successful resistance to the Hun, even as the town of Plataea earned an eternal fame by its noble action in the Persian war. While the great towns like Naissus and Singidunum yielded to the violence of the whirlwind, Aseumus did not bend. A division of the Huns, different from that which marched to Thrace, but of countless multitude, invaded Lower Moesia and laid siege to Aseumus. The garrison not only defied the foes, but so effectually harassed them by sallying forth that they retreated. The Aseumuntians were not satisfied with a successful defence. Their scouts discovered the opportune times, when plundering bodies of the Hunnic army were returning to the camp with spoils, and these

¹ Theophanes, 5942. See *Güldenpenning*, p. 344.

moments were eagerly seized by the adventurous citizens; the pillagers were unexpectedly attacked; many Scythians were slain, and many Roman prisoners, destined to languish in the wilds of Hungary, were rescued from captivity.¹

Meanwhile the Roman armies were returning from their campaigns in the East and in the West, but it is not clear whether the troops were actually employed against Attila, or whether Areobindus, who had commanded against Gaiseric, or Aspar, who had commanded against Isdigerd (Yezdegerd), the Persian king, accomplished anything of note against the Huns. A battle was certainly fought in the Thracian Chersonese, and Attila won the victory; but we know not who was his opponent.² Nor do we know what the master of soldiers in Thrace, Theodulus by name,³ was doing at Odessus.⁴ After this battle a peace was concluded between Theodosius and Attila. As it was Anatolius who was the negotiator, it was generally known as the "Peace of Anatolius" (443 A.D.)⁵ The terms were that the former payment of 700 lbs. of gold, made by the Romans to the Huns, was to be trebled; besides this 6000 lbs. of gold were to be paid at once; all Hunnic deserters were to be restored, while Roman deserters were only to be given up for a payment of 10 solidi a head.

For four years after this the Illyrian and Balkan lands were not laid waste by the harryings of the great enemy, but in 447 Scythia and Lower Moesia, which had suffered less in the former invasion, felt the presence of the Hun again.⁶ Marcianopolis was taken, and the Roman general Arnegisclus fell in a battle fought on the banks of the river Utus. At the same time another multitude descended the valley of the Vardar and advanced southward—though some doubt the record—as far as Thermopylae.⁷

Meanwhile embassies passed to and fro between the court of Attila and the court of Theodosius; and of the embassy

¹ Priscus, fr. 5.

² *Ib. ad init.*

³ *Ib.*

⁴ *Id.* fr. 4.

⁵ The date is rightly determined by Güldenpenning (p. 346) to 443, who points out that the *expeditio Asiana* (Marcellinus, cf. *Chron. Pasch.*) would not have been undertaken by Theodosius until after the conclusion of the peace.

For these negotiations, see Priscus, fr. 5. Güldenpenning notices that the small success of the Huns in Lower Moesia proves the efficiency of the measures taken by Anthemius, the prefect, for the defence of the Danube east of the Cebus (p. 346).

⁶ See Marcellinus *ad ann.*; *Chron. Pasch.* (whose author used Priscus).

⁷ Marcellinus.

of Maximin the historian Priscus, who accompanied the ambassador, has left us copious and interesting details, which give us a glimpse of Hun life, and will be reproduced in another chapter.

Until the end of the reign of Theodosius the oppressive Hun-money was paid to Attila; but when Marcian came to the throne he refused to pay the stipulated tribute. It seemed that the Illyrian peninsula would be again trampled under the horse-hoofs of Hunnic cavalry; but complications in the West averted the course of the destroyer in that direction, and the realm of Valentinian, not the realm of Marcian, was to resist the storm.

The Hunnic empire had assumed a really formidable size and power under the ambitious warrior Attila, who, we are told, in spite of his hideous features and complexion, had the unmistakable aspect of a ruler of men. Gepids and Ostrogoths, with many other German tribes, acknowledged the overlordship of the king of the Huns, who, as Jordanes says, "possessed Scythian and German kingdoms"—*Scythica et Germanica regna possedit*—though the extent of his domination is often exaggerated. Before 440 the Huns had attempted an invasion of Persia, and Roman officers talked of the chances of the overthrow of the Persian power by Attila and the possible consequences of such an event for the Roman world. But it was not destined that Attila should attempt to confront the great power of Asia; he was to shatter his strength in a contest with the forces of Europe on one of the great battlefields of the world's history.

CHAPTER XI

A GLIMPSE OF HUN LIFE

THE historian Priscus accompanied his friend Maximin on an embassy to Scythia or Hunland in the year 448, and wrote a full account of what befell them. Of this account, which has been fortunately preserved, the following is a free translation ¹ :—

“ We set out with the barbarians, and arrived at Sardica, which is thirteen days for a fast traveller from Constantinople. Halting there we considered it advisable to invite Edecon and the barbarians with him to dinner. The inhabitants of the place sold us sheep and oxen, which we butchered, and prepared a meal. In the course of the feast, as the barbarians lauded Attila and we lauded the Emperor, Bigilas remarked that it was not fair to compare a man and a god, meaning Attila by the man and Theodosius by the god. The Huns grew excited and hot at this remark. But we turned the conversation in another direction, and soothed their wounded feelings ; and after dinner, when we separated, Maximin presented Edecon and Orestes with silk garments and Indian gems. . . .

“ When we arrived at Naissus we found the city deserted, as though it had been sacked ; only a few sick persons lay in the churches. We halted at a short distance from the river, in an open space, for all the ground adjacent to the bank was full of the bones of men slain in war. On the morrow we came to the station of Agintheus, the commander-in-chief of the Illyrian armies (*magister militum per Illyricum*), who was posted not far from Naissus, to announce to him the imperial commands, and to receive five of those seventeen deserters, about whom Attila had written to the Emperor.² We had an interview with him, and having

¹ I have used the text of Priscus in Müller's *Frag. Hist. Graec.* vol. iv. It may be well to warn readers that the Latin translation appended cannot be implicitly trusted.

² *περὶ ὧν Ἀττίλα ἐγγράπτο* (p. 78).

In Müller's Latin translation under the text these words are mistranslated *de quibus ad Attilam scripserat*. τὰ παρὰ Ἀττίλα γράμματα (fr. 7, p. 76) is referred to.

treated the deserters with kindness, he committed them to us. The next day we proceeded from the district of Naissus¹ towards the Danube, we entered a covered valley with many bends and windings and circuitous paths. We thought we were travelling due west, but when the day dawned the sun rose in front; and some of us unacquainted with the topography cried out that the sun was going the wrong way, and portending unusual events. The fact was that that part of the road faced the east, owing to the irregularity of the ground. Having passed these rough places we arrived at a plain which was also well wooded. At the river we were received by barbarian ferrymen, who rowed us across the river in boats made by themselves out of single trees hewn and hollowed. These preparations had not been made for our sake, but to convey across a company of Huns; for Attila pretended that he wished to hunt in Roman territory, but his intent was really hostile, because all the deserters had not been given up to him. Having crossed the Danube, and proceeded with the barbarians about seventy stadia, we were compelled to wait in a certain plain, that Edecon and his party might go on in front and inform Attila of our arrival. As we were dining in the evening we heard the sound of horses approaching, and two Scythians arrived with directions that we were to set out to Attila. We asked them first to partake of our meal, and they dismounted and made good cheer. On the next day, under their guidance, we arrived at the tents of Attila, which were numerous, about three o'clock, and when we wished to pitch our tent on a hill the barbarians who met us prevented us, because the tent of Attila was on low ground, so we halted where the Scythians desired. . . . (Then a message is received from Attila, who was aware of the nature of their embassy, saying that if they had nothing further to communicate to him he would not receive them, so they reluctantly prepared to return.) When the baggage had been packed on the beasts of burden, and we were perforce preparing to start in the night time, messengers came from Attila bidding us wait on account of the late hour. Then men arrived with an ox and river fish, sent to us by Attila, and when we had dined we retired to sleep. When it was day we expected a gentle and courteous message from the barbarian, but he again bade us depart if we had no further mandates beyond what he already knew. We made no reply, and prepared to set out, though Bigilas insisted that we should feign to have some other communication to make. When I saw that Maximin was very dejected, I went to Scottas (one of the Hun nobles, brother of Onegesius), taking with me Rusticius, who understood the Hun language. He had come with us to Scythia, not as a member of the embassy, but on business with Constantius, an Italian whom Aetius had sent to Attila to be that monarch's private secretary. I informed Scottas, Rusticius acting as interpreter, that Maximin will give him many presents if he would procure him an interview with Attila; and, moreover, that the embassy will not only conduce to the public interests of the two powers, but to the private interest of

¹ Here is another mistranslation in Müller's Latin version, ἀπὸ τῶν ὄρων Naissou, a *montibus Naissi* (!). I mention these instances to show that the translation must be used with caution.

Onegesius, for the Emperor desired that he should be sent as an ambassador to Byzantium, to arrange the disputes of the Huns and Romans, and that there he would receive splendid gifts. As Onegesius was not present it was for Scottas, I said, to help us, or rather help his brother, and at the same time prove that the report was true which ascribed to him an influence with Attila equal to that possessed by his brother. Scottas mounted his horse and rode to Attila's tent, while I returned to Maximin, and found him in a state of perplexity and anxiety, lying on the grass with Bigilas. I described my interview with Scottas, and bade him make preparations for an audience of Attila. They both jumped up, approving of what I had done, and recalled the men who had started with the beasts of burden. As we were considering what to say to Attila, and how to present the Emperor's gifts, Scottas came to fetch us, and we entered Attila's tent, which was surrounded by a multitude of barbarians. We found Attila sitting on a wooden chair. We stood at a little distance and Maximin advanced and saluted the barbarian, to whom he gave the Emperor's letter, saying that the Emperor prayed for the safety of him and his. The king replied, 'It shall be unto the Romans as they wish it to be unto me,' and immediately addressed Bigilas, calling him a shameless beast, and asking him why he ventured to come when all the deserters had not been given up.¹ . . .

"After the departure of Bigilas, who returned to the Empire (nominally to find the deserters whose restoration Attila demanded, but really to get the money for his fellow-conspirator Edecon), we remained one day in that place, and then set out with Attila for the northern parts of the country. We accompanied the barbarian for a time, but when we reached a certain point took another route by the command of the Scythians who conducted us, as Attila was proceeding to a village where he intended to marry the daughter of Eskam, though he had many other wives, for the Scythians practised polygamy. We proceeded along a level road in a plain and met with navigable rivers—of which the greatest, next to the Danube, are the Drecon, Tigas, and Tiphesas—which we crossed in the monoxyles, boats made of one piece, used by the dwellers on the banks: the smaller rivers we traversed on rafts which the barbarians carry about with them on carts, for the purpose of crossing morasses. In the villages we were supplied with food—millet instead of corn, and mead (*μέδος*), as the natives call it, instead of wine. The attendants who followed us received millet, and a drink made of barley, which the barbarians call *kam*. Late in the evening, having travelled a long distance, we pitched our tents on the banks of a fresh-water lake, used for water by the inhabitants of the neighbouring village. But a wind and storm, accompanied by thunder and lightning and heavy rain, arose, and almost threw down our tents; all our utensils were rolled into the waters of the lake. Terrified by the mishap and the atmospherical disturbance, we left the place and lost one another in the dark and the rain, each following the road that seemed most easy. But we all reached the village by different ways, and raised an

¹ Edecon had betrayed to Attila the design which he and Bigilas had formed against Attila's life. This was the real reason of Attila's roughness towards the latter.

alarm to obtain what we lacked. The Scythians of the village sprang out of their huts at the noise, and, lighting the reeds which they use for kindling fires, asked what we wanted. Our conductors replied that the storm had alarmed us; so they invited us to their huts and provided warmth for us by lighting large fires of reeds. The lady who governed the village—she had been one of Bleda's wives—sent us provisions and good-looking girls to console us (this is a Scythian compliment). We treated the young women to a share in the eatables, but declined to take any further advantage of their presence. We remained in the huts till day dawned and then went to look for our lost utensils, which we found partly in the place where we had pitched the tent, partly on the bank of the lake, and partly in the water. We spent that day in the village drying our things; for the storm had ceased and the sun was bright. Having looked after our horses and cattle, we directed our steps to the princess, to whom we paid our respects and presented gifts in return for her courtesy. The gifts consisted of things which are esteemed by the barbarians as not produced in the country—three silver *phialai*, red skins, Indian pepper, palm fruit, and other delicacies.

“Having advanced a distance of ten days further, we halted at a village; for as the rest of the route was the same for us and Attila, it behoved us to wait, so that he might go in front. Here we met with some of the ‘western Romans,’¹ who had also come on an embassy to Attila—the Count Romulus, Promotus governor of Noricum, and Romanus a military captain. With them was Constantius whom Aetius had sent to Attila to be his secretary, and Tatulus, the father of Orestes; these two were not connected with the embassy, but were friends of the ambassadors. Constantius had known them of old in the Italies,² and Tatulus’ son Orestes had married the daughter of Romulus.³

“The object of the embassy was to soften the soul of Attila, who demanded the surrender of one Silvanus, a silversmith (or banker) in Rome, because he had received golden vessels from a certain Constantius. This Constantius, a native of Gaul,⁴ had preceded his namesake in the office of secretary to Attila. When Sirmium in Pannonia was besieged by the

¹ It is worth observing how the Greek-speaking Romans spoke of their Latin-speaking fellow-subjects. Valentinian is described as ὁ βασιλεύων τῶν ἐσπερίων Ρωμαίων. This, it need scarcely be remarked, does not imply that there was any idea afloat at the time of a western Roman Empire. Priscus calls the Latin language τὴν Αὐσονίαν “the tongue of the Ausonians” (p. 86), as opposed to “the tongue of the Hellenes.” To speak Greek is ἐλληνίζειν.

² ἐν ταῖς Ἰταλίαις—that is, Italy with its appendages Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica; just as “the Gauls” meant Gaul and Spain. This use of the plural is parallel to the dual *Mitrau* in the Rig-Veda, which does not mean “the two Mitras,” but “Mitra and Varuna,” because these

gods generally went together (like Castor and Pollux). It is possible also that in a passage in the *Iliad* Ἀλάρρ does not mean the two Ajaxes, but Ajax Telamonius and his brother Teucer, as a writer in Kuhn’s *Zeitschrift* suggested.

³ Romulus and his daughter were of Patavio in Noricum. Orestes’ son was called after his grandfather Romulus, and was the same as the famous and insignificant Emperor Romulus Augustulus who resigned in favour of Zeno in 476.

⁴ The way in which a Greek Roman spoke of Gaul deserves to be remarked: Gaul for him was “western Galatia:” ἐκ Γαλατῶν μὲν τῶν ἐν τῇ ἐσπέρῃ (Priscus, p. 84).

Scythians, the bishop of the place consigned the vessels to his (Constantius') care, that if the city were taken and he survived they might be used to ransom him ; and in case he were slain, to ransom the citizens who were led into captivity. But when the city was enslaved, Constantius violated his engagement, and, as he happened to be at Rome on business, pawned the vessels to Silvanus for a sum of money, on condition that if he gave back the money within a prescribed period the ~~dishes~~ should be returned, but otherwise should become Silvanus' property. Constantius, suspected of treachery, was crucified by Attila and Bleda ; and afterwards, when the affair of the vessels became known to Attila, he demanded the surrender of Silvanus on the ground that he had stolen his property. Accordingly Aetius and the Emperor of the Western Romans sent to explain that Silvanus was Constantius' creditor, the vessels having been pawned and not stolen, and that he had sold them to priests and others for sacred purposes. If, however, Attila refused to desist from his demand, he, the Emperor, would send him the value of the vessels, but would not surrender the innocent Silvanus.

" Having waited for some time until Attila advanced in front of us, we proceeded, and having crossed some rivers we arrived at a large village, where Attila's house was said to be more splendid than his residences in other places. It was made of polished boards, and surrounded with a wooden enclosure, designed, not for protection, but for appearance. The house of Onegesius was second to the king's¹ in splendour, and was also encircled with a wooden enclosure, but it was not adorned with towers like that of the king. Not far from the enclosure was a large bath which Onegesius—who was the second in power among the Scythians—built, having transported the stones from Pannonia ; for the barbarians in this district had no stones or trees, but used imported material. The builder of the bath was a captive from Sirmium, who expected to win his freedom as payment for making the bath. But he was disappointed, and greater trouble befell him than mere captivity among the Scythians, for Onegesius appointed him bathman, and he used to minister to him and his family when they bathed.

" When Attila entered the village he was met by girls advancing in rows, under thin white canopies of linen, which were held up by the outside women who stood under them, and were so large that seven or more girls walked beneath each. There were many lines of damsels thus canopied, and they sang Scythian songs. When he came near the house of Onegesius, which lay on his way, the wife of Onegesius issued from the door, with a number of servants, bearing meat and wine, and saluted him and begged him to partake of her hospitality. This is the highest honour that can be shown among the Scythians. To gratify the wife of his friend, he ate, just as he sat on his horse, his attendants raising the tray to his saddlebow ; and having tasted the wine, he went on to the palace.

¹ Occasionally Priscus speaks of Attila as *ὁ βασιλεύς*, a word which in the ordinary spoken language of the time was reserved for the Emperor, while the Latin *rex* might be used for a king.

Priscus, however, writes in a conventional prose, which avoids the expressions of the spoken tongue. *βασιλεύς*, however, was still legitimately used of the Persian monarch.

which was higher than the other houses and built on an elevated site. But we remained in the house of Onegesius, at his invitation, for he had returned from his expedition with Attila's son. His wife and kinsfolk entertained us to dinner, for he had no leisure himself, as he had to relate to Attila the result of his expedition, and explain the accident which had happened to the young prince, who had slipped and broken his right hand. After dinner we left the house of Onegesius, and took up our quarters nearer the palace, so that Maximin might be at a convenient distance for visiting Attila or holding intercourse with his court. The next morning, at dawn of day, Maximin sent me to Onegesius, with presents offered by himself as well as those which the Emperor had sent, and I was to find out whether he would have an interview with Maximin and at what time. When I arrived at the house, along with the attendants who carried the gifts, I found the doors closed, and had to wait until some one should come out and announce our arrival. As I waited and walked up and down in front of the enclosure which surrounded the house, a man, whom from his Scythian dress I took for a barbarian, came up and addressed me in Greek, with the word *Χαῖρε*, 'Hail!' I was surprised at a Scythian speaking Greek. For the subjects of the Huns, swept together from various lands, speak, beside their own barbarous tongue, either Hunnic or Gothic,¹ or—as many as have commercial dealings with the western Romans—Latin; but none of them easily speak Greek, except captives from the Thracian or Illyrian sea-coast; and these last are easily known to any stranger by their torn garments and the squalor of their head, as men who have met with a reverse. This man, on the contrary, resembled a well-to-do Scythian, being well dressed, and having his hair cut in a circle after Scythian fashion. Having returned his salutation, I asked him who he was and whence he had come into a foreign land and adopted Scythian life. When he asked me why I wanted to know, I told him that his Hellenic speech had prompted my curiosity. Then he smiled and said that he was born a Greek² and had gone as a merchant to Viminacium, on the Danube, where he had stayed a long time, and married a very rich wife. But the city fell a prey to the barbarians, and he was stript of his prosperity, and on account of his riches was allotted to Onegesius in the division of the spoil, as it was the custom among the Scythians for the chiefs to reserve for themselves the rich prisoners. Having fought bravely against the Romans and the Acatiri, he had paid the spoils he won to his master, and so obtained freedom. He then married a barbarian wife and had children, and had the privilege of partaking at the table of Onegesius.

"He considered his new life among the Scythians better than his old life among the Romans, and the reasons he urged were as follows: 'After war the Scythians live in inactivity, enjoying what they have got, and not at all, or very little, harassed. The Romans, on the other hand, are

¹ That is, Hunnic or Gothic were the recognised languages of the Hun empire, in which of course many barbarous Tartaric tongues were spoken.

² ἔφη Γραικὸς μὲν εἶναι τὸ γένος (p. 86),

Γραικός, not Ἕλλην, a Greek, not a Hellenic, which would mean a pagan. Ἑλληνικός and ἐλληνίζειν were still used in their old sense; and we even meet τὴν Ἑλλήνων φωνήν.

in the first place very liable to perish in war, as they have to rest their hopes of safety on others, and are not allowed, on account of their *tyrants*, to use arms. And those who use them are injured by the cowardice of their generals, who cannot support the conduct of war. But the condition of the subjects in time of peace is far more grievous than the evils of war, for the exaction of the taxes is very severe, and unprincipled men inflict injuries on others, because the laws are practically not valid against all classes. A transgressor who belongs to the wealthy classes is not punished for his injustice, while a poor man, who does not understand business, undergoes the legal penalty, that is if he does not depart this life before the trial, so long is the course of lawsuits protracted, and so much money is expended on them. The climax of the misery is to have to pay in order to obtain justice. For no one will give a court to the injured man except he pay a sum of money to the judge and the judge's clerks.'

"In reply to this attack on the Empire, I asked him to be good enough to listen with patience to the other side of the question. 'The creators of the Roman republic,' I said, 'who were wise and good men, in order to prevent things from being done at haphazard, made one class of men guardians of the laws, and appointed another class to the profession of arms, who were to have no other object than to be always ready for battle, and to go forth to war without dread, as though to their ordinary exercise, having by practice exhausted all their fear beforehand. Others again were assigned to attend to the cultivation of the ground, to support both themselves and those who fight in their defence, by contributing the military corn-supply. . . . To those who protect the interests of the litigants a sum of money is paid by the latter, just as a payment is made by the farmers to the soldiers. Is it not fair to support him who assists and requite him for his kindness? The support of the horse benefits the horseman. . . . Those who spend money on a suit and lose it in the end cannot fairly put it down to anything but the injustice of their case. And as to the long time spent on lawsuits, that is due to concern for justice, that judges may not fail in passing accurate judgments, by having to give sentence offhand ; it is better that they should reflect, and conclude the case more tardily, than that by judging in a hurry they should both injure man and transgress against the Deity, the institutor of justice. . . . The Romans treat their servants better than the king of the Scythians treats his subjects. They deal with them as fathers or teachers, admonishing them to abstain from evil and follow the lines of conduct which they have esteemed honourable ; they reprove them for their errors like their own children. They are not allowed, like the Scythians, to inflict death on them. They have numerous ways of conferring freedom ; they can manumit not only during life, but also by their wills, and the testamentary wishes of a Roman in regard to his property are law.'¹

"My interlocutor shed tears, and confessed that the laws and constitution of the Romans were fair, but deplored that the governors, not possessing the spirit of former generations, were ruining the State.

¹ This passage is interesting as an illustration of the attitude of the higher classes in the Empire to slavery in the fifth century.

"As we were engaged in this discussion a servant came out and opened the door of the enclosure. I hurried up, and inquired how Onegesius was engaged, for I desired to give him a message from the Roman ambassador. He replied that I should meet him if I waited a little, as he was about to go forth. And after a short time I saw him coming out, and addressed him, saying, 'The Roman ambassador salutes you, and I have come with gifts from him, and with the gold which the Emperor sent you. The ambassador is anxious to meet you, and begs you to appoint a time and place.' Onegesius bade his servants receive the gold and the gifts, and told me to announce to Maximin that he would go to him immediately. I delivered the message, and Onegesius appeared in the tent without delay. He expressed his thanks to Maximin and the Emperor for the presents, and asked why he sent for him. Maximin said that the time had come for Onegesius to have greater renown among men, if he would go to the Emperor, and by his wisdom arrange the objects of dispute between the Romans and Huns, and establish concord between them ; and thereby he will also procure many advantages for his own family, as he and his children will be always friends of the Emperor and the imperial race.¹ Then Onegesius inquired what measures would gratify the Emperor, and how he could arrange the disputes. Maximin replied : ' If you cross into the lands of the Roman Empire you will lay the Emperor under an obligation, and you will arrange the matters at issue by investigating their causes and deciding them on the basis of the peace. Onegesius said he would inform the Emperor and his ministers of Attila's wishes, but the Romans need not think they could ever prevail with him to betray his master or neglect his Scythian training and his wives and children, or to prefer wealth among the Romans to bondage with Attila. He added that he would be of more service to the Romans by remaining in his own land and softening the anger of his master, if he were indignant for aught with the Romans, than by visiting them and subjecting himself to blame if he made arrangements that Attila did not approve of. He then retired, having consented that I should act as intermediate in conveying messages from Maximin to himself, for it would not have been consistent with Maximin's dignity as ambassador to visit him constantly.

"The next day I entered the enclosure of Attila's palace, bearing gifts to his wife, whose name was Kreka. She had three sons, of whom the eldest governed the Acatiri and the other nations who dwell in Pontic Scythia. Within the enclosure were numerous buildings, some of carved boards beautifully fitted together, others of straight planed beams, without carving, fastened on round wooden blocks which rose to a moderate height from the ground. Attila's wife lived here, and, having been admitted by the barbarians at the door, I found her reclining on a soft couch. The floor of the room was covered with woollen mats for walking on. A number

¹ It is worth while noticing this expression τῷ ἐκείνου γένει, which unintentionally expresses the general idea that the Roman Empire was hereditary. Theoretically it was not

hereditary (see p. 227), but it would have been treasonable to hint that any one but a relative (a son, if there were sons) of the reigning Emperor might succeed him.

of servants stood round her, and maids sitting on the floor in front of her embroidered with colours linen cloths intended to be placed over the Scythian dress for ornament. Having approached, saluted her, and presented the gifts, I went out, and walked to the other houses, where Attila was, and waited for Onegesius, who, as I knew, was with Attila. I stood in the middle of a great crowd—the guards of Attila and his attendants knew me, and so no one hindered me. I saw a number of people advancing, and a great commotion and noise, Attila's egress being expected. And he came forth from the house with a dignified strut, looking round on this side and on that. He was accompanied by Onegesius, and stood in front of the house ; and many persons who had lawsuits with one another came up and received his judgment. Then he returned into the house, and received ambassadors of barbarous peoples.

“As I was waiting for Onegesius, I was accosted by Romulus and Promotus and Romanus, the ambassadors who had come from Italy about the golden vessels ; they were accompanied by Rusticius and by Constantiolus, a man from the Pannonian territory, which was subjected to Attila. They asked me whether we had been dismissed or are constrained to remain, and I replied that it was just to learn this from Onegesius that I was waiting outside the palace. When I inquired in my turn whether Attila had vouchsafed them a kind reply, they told me that his decision could not be moved, and that he threatened war unless either Silvanus or the drinking vessels should be given up. . . .

“As we were talking about the state of the world, Onegesius came out ; we went up to him and asked him about our concerns. Having first spoken with some barbarians, he bade me inquire of Maximin what consular the Romans are sending as an ambassador to Attila. When I came to our tent I delivered the message to Maximin, and deliberated with him what answer we should make to the question of the barbarian. Returning to Onegesius, I said that the Romans desired him to come to them and adjust the matters of dispute, otherwise the Emperor will send whatever ambassador he chooses. He then bade me fetch Maximin, whom he conducted to the presence of Attila. Soon after Maximin came out, and told me that the barbarian wished Nomos or Anatolius or Senator to be the ambassador, and that he would not receive any other than one of these three ; when he (Maximin) replied that it was not meet to mention men by name and so render them suspected in the eyes of the Emperor, Attila said that if they do not choose to comply with his wishes the differences will be adjusted by arms.

“When we returned to our tent the father of Orestes came with an invitation from Attila for both of us to a banquet at three o'clock. When the hour arrived we went to the palace, along with the embassy from the western Romans, and stood on the threshold of the hall in the presence of Attila. The cup-bearers gave us a cup, according to the national custom, that we might pray before we sat down. Having tasted the cup, we proceeded to take our seats ; all the chairs were ranged along the walls of the room on either side. Attila sat in the middle on a couch ; a second couch was set behind him, and from it steps led up to his bed, which was covered with linen sheets and wrought coverlets for ornament, such as

Greeks¹ and Romans use to deck bridal beds. The places on the right of Attila were held chief in honour, those on the left, where we sat, were only second. Berichus, a noble among the Scythians, sat on our side, but had the precedence of us. Onegesius sat on a chair on the right of Attila's couch, and over against Onegesius on a chair sat two of Attila's sons; his eldest son sat on his couch, not near him, but at the extreme end, with his eyes fixed on the ground, in shy respect for his father. When all were arranged, a cupbearer came and handed Attila a wooden cup of wine. He took it, and saluted the first in precedence, who, honoured by the salutation, stood up, and might not sit down until the king, having tasted or drained the wine, returned the cup to the attendant. All the guests then honoured Attila in the same way, saluting him, and then tasting the cups; but he did not stand up. Each of us had a special cupbearer, who would come forward in order to present the wine, when the cupbearer of Attila retired. When the second in precedence and those next to him had been honoured in like manner, Attila toasted us in the same way according to the order of the seats. When this ceremony was over the cupbearers retired, and tables, large enough for three or four, or even more, to sit at, were placed next the table of Attila, so that each could take of the food on the dishes without leaving his seat. The attendant of Attila first entered with a dish full of meat, and behind him came the other attendants with bread and viands, which they laid on the tables. A luxurious meal, served on silver plate, had been made ready for us and the barbarian guests, but Attila ate nothing but meat on a wooden trencher. In everything else, too, he showed himself temperate; his cup was of wood, while to the guests were given goblets of gold and silver. His dress, too, was quite simple, affecting only to be clean. The sword he carried at his side, the latchets of his Scythian shoes, the bridle of his horse were not adorned, like those of the other Scythians, with gold or gems or anything costly. When the viands of the first course had been consumed we all stood up, and did not resume our seats until each one, in the order before observed, drank to the health of Attila in the goblet of wine presented to him. We then sat down, and a second dish was placed on each table with eatables of another kind. After this course the same ceremony was observed as after the first. When evening fell torches were lit, and two barbarians coming forward in front of Attila sang songs they had composed, celebrating his victories and deeds of valour in war. And of the guests, as they looked at the singers, some were pleased with the verses, others reminded of wars were excited in their souls, while yet others, whose bodies were feeble with age and their spirits compelled to rest, shed tears. After the songs a Scythian, whose mind was deranged, appeared, and by uttering outlandish and senseless words forced the company to laugh. After him Zerkon, the Moorish dwarf, entered. He had been sent by Attila as a gift to Aetius, and Edecon had persuaded him to come to Attila in order to recover his wife, whom he had left behind him in Scythia; the lady was a Scythian whom he had obtained in marriage

¹ Ἕλληνες τε καὶ Ῥωμαῖοι. In using this expression Priscus had ancient times in his mind—times when the

Greeks were not Romans, but Ἕλληνες, and when Ἕλληγ was not opposed to Χριστιανός.

through the influence of his patron Bleda. He did not succeed in recovering her, for Attila was angry with him for returning. On the occasion of the banquet he made his appearance, and threw all except Attila into fits of unquenchable laughter by his appearance, his dress, his voice, and his words, which were a confused jumble of Latin, Hunnic, and Gothic. Attila, however, remained immovable and of unchanging countenance, nor by word or act did he betray anything approaching to a smile of merriment except at the entry of Ernas, his youngest son, whom he pulled by the cheek, and gazed on with a calm look of satisfaction. I was surprised that he made so much of this son, and neglected his other children ; but a barbarian who sat beside me and knew Latin, bidding me not reveal what he told, gave me to understand that prophets had forewarned Attila that his race would fall, but would be restored by this boy. When the night had advanced we retired from the banquet, not wishing to assist further at the potations."

It will be noticed that in the foregoing narrative the word Scythian and the word Hun seem at first sight to be used indifferently. A certain distinction between them can, however, be perceived, and therefore, though they are most often practically synonymous, I have reproduced both words in the translation just as they occur in the original. Scythian is not merely an ancient term applied to a new people, in the same way as the Goths and the Slaves were often called Getae by pedantic historians ; Scythian was a generic term for all nomadic nations, and as a great many different nomadic nations were united under the sovereignty of Attila, it was a very convenient and natural name to apply to his subjects. The Huns, Attila's own nation, were Scythians, but all Scythians were not Huns. And thus, to use a more modern distinction, we might say that Attila was king of the Huns and emperor of the Scythians.

12. 1. 21.

CHAPTER X

THE LATER YEARS OF JUSTINIAN'S REIGN

JUSTINIAN'S policy aimed not only at extending the limits of the Empire in the West at the cost of German nations, but also at diffusing his influence among minor peoples and tribes on other frontiers. In fact he pursued an *imperial* policy, in the modern sense of the term. Lazica became dependent on the Empire, and the appointment of a Lazic king rested with his suzerain the Emperor. The Tzani and the Apsilians occupied a similar position. Conversion to Christianity usually attended the establishment of such relations. Justinian had the glory of superintending the baptism of Gretes, king of the Heruls, and Gordas, king of the Huns, who lived near Bosphorus¹; he had the privilege of converting the Abasgians and the Nobadae to the true religion, and of sending a bishop and clergy to the king of the Axumites. It is recorded that Zamanarzus, the king of the Iberians, came to Constantinople and was admitted to Justinian's friendship, and Theodora presented his wife with pearl ornaments.²

An event occurred which increased Roman influence in southern Arabia. Roman merchants bound for the land of Abyssinia were obliged to pass through the kingdom of the Homerites or Himyarites, which was ruled by Damian in the early part of Justinian's reign. Damian adopted the imprudent policy of plundering and slaying the traders who passed

¹ Theophanes, *Chron. ad* 6020 A.M. (527, 528 A.D.) As to the Tzani, cf. Nov. xxxi. (ed. Zachariä) 535 A.D., ἡ Τζάνων χώρα νῦν πρῶτον ἐφ' ἡμῶν ὑπὸ Ῥωμαίων κατακτηθεῖσα.

² *Ib.* 6027 A.M. (534, 535 A.D.) This gift reminds us that Theodora herself is represented as adorned with pearls in the well-known mosaic in San Vitale at Ravenna.

through his dominions, and the consequence was that the commerce between the Empire and Abyssinia ceased. Then Adad, the king of Axum (as Abyssinia was called), said to Damian, "You have injured my kingdom"; and they made war. And Adad said, "If I defeat the Homerites, I will become a Christian." He took Damian alive, and subdued the land of Yemen. True to his promise, he besought Justinian to send him a bishop and clergy, and an Abyssinian church was founded.¹

Less promising converts to Christianity were the Heruls, proverbially notorious for brutish habits and stupidity,² who had first sought an asylum with the Gepids, but were soon driven away on account of their intolerable manners. Then admitted into the Empire by Anastasius, they incurred his resentment and chastisement. Justinian made corps of Heruls a standing part of his army.

In the year 548 four envoys arrived at Constantinople from the Goths of Crimea, who are known as the Tetraxite Goths, to request Justinian to send them a new bishop, as their bishop had died. These Goths were presumably converted in the fourth century, and not joining in the westward movement of the other tribes of their nationality, lived quietly in a secluded nook in the peninsula of Bosphorus and Cherson. Their religion no longer possessed the distinctive marks of Arianism, though originally they were Arians. Procopius says that their religion was simple and pious.³ Thus in the Crimea, where Justinian had already made the city of Bosphorus an imperial dependency, the Tetraxite Goths acknowledged his supremacy.

There was some reason for the fears of Chosroes, and for the words which Procopius puts into the mouth of the Armenian ambassadors concerning Justinian, "The whole world does not contain him,"—and that was in 539. At that time, as the ambassadors said, besides having subdued Africa and Sicily and almost subdued Italy, he had imposed the yoke of servitude on

¹ Theophanes, *Chron. ad* 6035 A.M. (542, 543 A.D.) Theophanes calls the realm of Axum ἡ ἐνδοτέρα Ἰνδία. Coins show that Greek was known in the country for some time after the introduction of Christianity, and disappeared only about the seventh century. Aure-

lian conquered the Axumites (Vopiscus, 33, 4). On the "Axumitic Kingdom," see an essay by Dillmann in the *Abhandlungen der Berliner Akademie*, 1878.

² See Procopius, *B. G.* ii. 14.

³ *Ib.* iv. 4.

the Tzani and the yoke of tribute on the Armenians; he had set a Roman *dux* over "the king of the wretched Lazi"; he had sent military governors to the Bosporites, who were formerly subject to the Huns, and had added a city to his sway; he had made an alliance with the Ethiopians; the Homerites and the Red Sea were included in his rule, and the land of palms (ὁ Φοινικῶν). Before he died he had completely reduced Italy, as well as the islands of Corsica and Sardinia, and he had recovered a portion of Spain for the Roman Empire. The Franks, however, ceased to revere the Empire as they had been wont, and began to coin their own gold money without the Emperor's image, although no other barbarian king, not even the Sassanid, was permitted, according to Procopius, by the conditions of commerce, to impress his own effigy on gold coins.¹

It has already been noticed that a medieval gloom pervades the second period of this reign, and affects the Emperor; who applies himself more and more to the ecclesiastical side of his policy. The observations of Agathias on this later character, with special reference to military affairs, are instructive²:—

"When the Emperor conquered all Italy and Libya, and waged successfully those mighty wars, and of the princes who reigned at Constantinople was the first to show himself an absolute sovereign in fact as well as in name—after these things had been achieved by him in his youth and vigour, and when he entered on the last stage of life, he seemed to be weary of labours,³ and preferred to create discord among his foes or to mollify them with gifts, and so keep off their hostilities, instead of trusting in his own forces and shrinking from no danger. He consequently allowed the troops to decline in strength, because he expected that he would not require their services. And those who were second to himself in authority, on whom it was incumbent to collect the taxes and supply the army with necessary provisions, were infected with the same indifference, and either openly kept back the rations altogether or paid them long after they were due; and when the debt was paid at last, persons skilled in the rascally science of arithmetic demanded back from the soldiers what had been given them. It was their privilege to bring various

¹ Proc. *B. G.* iii. 33.

² Bk. v. 14. Complaints of Justinian's treatment of the army, substantially agreeing with this passage of Agathias, will be found in the *Secret History*, cap. 24, where it is mentioned

that the logothetae stopped promotion.

³ Compare what Menander says in fr. 4, but it is probable that his statement of Justinian's *πάθυμα* rests on this passage of Agathias.

charges against the soldiers, and deprive them of their food. . . . Thus the army was neglected, and the soldiers, pressed by hunger, left their profession to embrace other modes of life."

Thus the decay of the army was one of the chief characteristics of this period. The Asiatic provinces were slowly recovering after the plague; the Balkan provinces were subject to the constant irruptions of barbarians; and all were oppressed by the severe fiscal system, which the execution of Justinian's designs in the West did not permit him to relax. The establishment of monopolies, which was a feature of his policy, aimed at increasing his revenues, without regard to their effects on trade; nevertheless he encouraged commerce, and the wars which were carried on in Persia probably concerned mercantile interests a great deal more than historians indicate. Although John of Cappadocia partially did away with the *cursus publicus*, the Emperor was active in improving roads and constructing bridges in the provinces, thereby facilitating commerce; but he seems to have made the custom duties at Abydos and at the entrance to the Euxine heavier, and perhaps even farmed this source of revenue.

Justinian's reign is notable in the history of industry for the introduction of silk manufacture into Europe.¹ Certain monks arrived from India and sought an interview with the Emperor. They informed him that, having lived long in Serinda (China), they had learned a method by which silk could be made in the Roman Empire, so that the Romans would no longer be obliged to obtain the precious material through their enemies the Persians. The liberal promises of Justinian induced them to return to "India," and they succeeded in bringing back safely eggs of silkworms. Some years later, when the Turks came to the court of Justinian's successor, they were surprised when they were shown the silk manufactories, "for at that time they possessed all the markets and harbours of the Chinese."²

There has probably never been a period in which more public works were executed than the reign of Justinian. New towns were founded, innumerable churches were erected, aque-

¹ See Procopius, *B. G.* iv. 17. Theophanes of Byzantium tells a different story (fr. 3). According to him, a Persian from China brought the "sperm of the worms in a hollow

wand" (narthex) to Byzantium.

² Theophanes Byz. *ib.* I do not attempt to discuss the relation of the Turks and the Seres.

ducts were constructed,¹ bridges were built; cities were fortified, extended, or restored and enriched with new baths and palaces; the mere enumeration of these results of Justinian's activity would fill pages.² It may be doubted whether the expenses which he thus incurred would be justified by the rules of a prudent economy; his "mania" for building certainly furnished a ground of complaint for the party of opposition to use against him. Yet his works, both secular and sacred, were useful, and under ordinary conditions should have contributed to the prosperity of the Empire. New roads and secure bridges facilitated commerce, aqueducts and fortifications provided for the health and the safety of the inhabitants, while the erection of churches by the Emperor tended to strengthen the ties between the provinces and the central government. The enormous outlay on the building of St. Sophia, the creation of Anthemius, needs no justification.

Earthquakes were frequent in the days of Justinian, who did his utmost to alleviate their effects. Antioch suffered in 526, Pompeiopolis in 536, Cyzicus in 543. In 551 there were great physical disturbances in Greece; 4000 inhabitants were engulfed at Patrae. Three years later an earthquake destroyed many cities both in the islands and on the mainland, causing great loss of life. Among the rest, it reduced to ruin Berytus, then "the pride (ἐγκαλλώπισμα) of Phoenicia," and hardly a trace of that city's splendid buildings was left. Berytus was the seat of a law school, and many educated strangers who had gone thither to study law perished, so that the misfortune was unusually tragic. While the city was being rebuilt, the professors of law (ὕφηγηταί) lectured in Sidon. This earthquake was so severe that a slight shock was felt even at Alexandria, where the historian Agathias was sojourning at the time.³ All the inhabitants were terrified at the unwonted sensation, and none

¹ At Trapezus, Nicaea, Perinthus, Libyan Ptolemais, and Alexandria. The aqueduct at Alexandria is mentioned by Malalas. Justinian strengthened the corn magazine at Alexandria; a strong building was necessary, as in times of scarcity the populace tried to storm it. Caesarea in Cappadocia was improved by a change in the fortifications. Ni-

comedia and Nicaea were enriched with new buildings. Next to St. Sophia, the most important church which Justinian erected in the East was that of the Virgin at Jerusalem (Proc. *de Aed.* v. 6).

² See the work of Procopius in Six Books *περὶ κτισμάτων* (*de Aedificiis*).

³ Agath. ii. 15.

remained in the houses. Although the shock was slight, there was some reason for their terror, as the houses at Alexandria were of very unsubstantial structure. The island of Cos suffered more than any other tract of land. Agathias visited it in returning from Alexandria to Constantinople, and found it in a state of utter desolation. Three years later another earthquake visited the region of Byzantium and threatened to destroy the whole city. It was peculiarly severe both in violence and duration, and Agathias gives us a vivid account of its horrors and moral effects. The only victim of distinction was the curator of the palace, Anatolius, who perished by the fall of a marble slab fixed in the wall close to his bed. I mention this for the sake of Agathias' comment. Many people said that it was a providential punishment of Anatolius for acts of injustice and oppression. "I doubt it," said Agathias,¹ "for an earthquake would be a most desirable and excellent thing if it knew how to discriminate the bad from the good, slaying those and passing these by. But, even granting that he was unjust, there were many more like him, and worse, who escaped unharmed. And besides," he adds, "if Plato is right, the man who is punished in this life is more fortunate than he who is allowed to live in his sins."

As Justinian grew old and weak and had no issue, an element which affected political life in Constantinople was the question of the succession to the throne. It led to a sort of party rivalry between the relations of Theodora and the relations of Justinian; and the difficulty was ultimately solved by the marriage of Sophia, Theodora's niece, with Justin, Justinian's nephew. While she was alive Theodora had looked with disfavour on Justinian's kin.² She died in 548 (27th June), and perhaps it was the loss of her that clouded the spirits and depressed the energy of the Emperor in his later years.

The conspiracy which was formed against the life of the Emperor in 548 was of no serious political importance; it was organised by a pair of dissatisfied Armenians, who owed

¹ v. 3.

² The statement of the *Secret History* that she hated Germanus and prevented his sons from marrying is quite credible (cap. 5).

Justinian a personal grudge.¹ Artabanes, the commander in Africa, had overthrown the usurper Gontharis and delivered from his hands the Emperor's niece Praejecta, whose husband Areobindus had been put to death by the tyrant. From gratitude, not from love, Praejecta consented to become the wife of Artabanes, who aspired to an alliance with the imperial house; and the count of Africa hastened to surrender the newly conferred dignity and obtain his recall from Justinian, that he might return to Constantinople, whither Praejecta had preceded him, and celebrate the marriage. He was received with open arms in the capital; he became *magister militum in praesenti* and captain of the *foederati*; his tall and dignified stature, his concise speech, and his generosity won the admiration of all. But an unexpected obstacle to the proposed marriage occurred in the person of a previous wife, whom he had put away many years before. As long as Artabanes was an obscure individual, the lady was contented to leave him in peace and give no sign of her existence; but when he suddenly rose to fame, she determined to assert her conjugal rights, and, as a wronged woman, she implored the aid of Theodora. The Empress, "whose nature it was to undertake the cause of injured women," compelled the unwilling master of soldiers to take his wife once more to his bosom, and Praejecta became the bride of John, the son of Pompeius and grandson of the Emperor Anastasius. Shortly after this the Empress died, and Artabanes immediately put away for the second time his unwelcome wife, but Praejecta was lost to him, and he nourished a grudge against the Emperor.

Had it depended only on himself, Artabanes would never have undertaken any sinister design, but a countryman of his, named Arsaces, a descendant of the Parthian Arsacidae, was animated with a bitter desire of revenge upon Justinian, who had inflicted a comparatively light punishment on him for treacherous correspondence with Chosroes; and he diligently fanned into flame the less eager feelings of Artabanes. He reminded him that he had lost the bride he desired and been obliged to submit to the presence of the wife he hated; he urged the facility of despatching Justinian, "who is accustomed to sit without guards in the Museum, in the company

¹ Our source for this conspiracy is Procopius, *B. G.* iii. 31, 32.

of old priests, till late hours of the night, deep in the study of the holy books of the Christians." Above all, he expressed his conviction that Germanus would readily take part in such a conspiracy. For Boraides, the brother of Germanus, had on his death left almost all his property to his brother, allowing his wife and daughter to receive only as much as was legally necessary. But Justinian had altered the will so as to favour the daughter, and this was felt by Germanus, her uncle, as a grievance.

When he had won Artabanes to his plan, Arsaces opened communications with Justin, the eldest son of Germanus. Having bound him by oath not to reveal the conversation to any person except his father, he enlarged on the manner in which the Emperor ill treated and passed over his relations, and expressed his conviction that it would go still harder with them when Belisarius arrived. He did not hesitate to reveal the plan of assassination which he had formed in conjunction with Artabanes and Chanaranges, a young and frivolous Armenian who had been admitted to their counsels.

Justin, terrified at this revelation, laid it before his father, who immediately consulted with Marcellus, the prefect of the palatine guards, as to whether it would be wise to inform the Emperor immediately. Marcellus, an honourable, austere, and wary man, dissuaded Germanus from taking that course, on the ground that such a communication, necessitating a private interview with the Emperor, would inevitably become known to the conspirators and lead to Arsaces' escape. He proposed to investigate the matter himself beforehand, and it was arranged that Arsaces should be lured to speak in the presence of a concealed witness. Justin appointed a day and hour for an interview between Germanus and Arsaces, and the compromising revelations were overheard by Leontius, a friend of Marcellus, who was hidden behind a cloth screen. The programme of the matured plot was to wait for the arrival of Belisarius and slay the Emperor and his general at the same time; for if Justinian were slain beforehand, the revolutionists might not be able to contend against the military forces of Belisarius. When the deed was done, Germanus was to be proclaimed Emperor.

Marcellus still hesitated to reveal the plot to the Emperor,

out of friendship or pity for Artabanes. But when Belisarius was drawing nigh to the capital, he could hesitate no longer, and Justinian ordered the conspirators to be arrested. Germanus and Justin were at first not exempted from suspicion, but when the senate inquired into the case, the testimony of Marcellus and Leontius, and two other officers to whom Germanus had prudently disclosed the affair, completely cleared them. Even then Justinian was still indignant that they had concealed the treason so long, and was not mollified until the candid Marcellus took all the blame of the delay upon himself. The conspirators were treated with clemency, being confined in the palace and not in the public prison. It is to be concluded from the words of Procopius, which are not express, that they were ultimately pardoned.

The policy of Justinian in playing off one barbarian people against another is well exemplified in his dealings with the Cotrigur and Utrigur Huns,¹ who dwelt on the northern shores of the Euxine. It appears that the Gepids called in the help of the former against their neighbours and rivals the Lombards. Twelve thousand Cotrigurs, under the warrior Chinialus, answered the call, and arrived a year before the truce which existed between the Gepids and their foes had expired. The Gepids persuaded their guests to occupy the interval by invading the provinces of the Empire. Justinian, who was in the habit of allowing large donations both to the Cotriguri and Utriguri, sent a message to Sandichl, the chief of the latter, and chid him for his supineness in allowing his neighbours to advance against the Empire. New gifts induced the Utriguri to march against the land of the invaders, and the Roman allies were reinforced by two thousand Tetraxite Goths. The Cotrigur Huns were defeated with great slaughter in their own territory; their wives and children were led captive beyond the river Tanais, which separated the two countries, and many thousand prisoners, who languished in slavery, were enabled to escape. The invaders then withdrew beyond the Roman borders, having received a sum of money from the Roman captain Aratius; but two thousand Huns,² who had fled before the Utrigurs, threw

¹ Also written Coturguri and Uturguri. See Procopius, *B. G.* iv. cap. 18, 19.

² One of their leaders was Sinnio, who had served with Belisarius in the Vandalic war.

themselves on the mercy of the Emperor and were graciously allowed to settle in a district of Thrace. The news of this clemency exasperated the Utrigurs; Sandichl sent envoys to remonstrate, but the gifts and soft words of Justinian appeased their resentment.

A great invasion of the Cotrigur Huns, under Zabergan, took place in the last months of 558.¹ The real motive, as Agathias remarks, was the greed of an uncivilised barbarian, though Zabergan cloaked it with the complaint that the Emperor had been friendly with Sandichl, the king of the Utrigur Huns. The invader crossed the frozen Danube, and, passing unopposed through Scythia and Moesia, entered Thrace, where he divided his hordes into three armies. One was sent westward to Greece, to ravage the unprotected country, the second was sent into the Thracian Chersonese to capture the towns of Aphrodisias, Thescus, Ciberis, Sestos, and the ugly little Kallipolis, which belied its name, and to seize ships and cross to Abydos; the third army, consisting of seven thousand cavalry, marched under Zabergan himself to Constantinople.

The terrible ravages and cruelties committed by the third and main body are thus described by the contemporary writer Agathias:—

“As no resistance was offered to their course, they overran and plundered everything mercilessly, obtaining a great booty and large numbers of captives. Among the rest, well-born women of chaste life were most cruelly carried off to undergo the worst of all misfortunes, and minister to the unbridled lust of the barbarians; some who in early youth had renounced marriage and the cares and pleasures of this life, and had immured themselves in some religious retreat, deeming it of the highest importance to be free from cohabitation with men, were dragged from the chambers of their virginity and violated. Many married women who happened to be pregnant were dragged away, and when their hour was come brought forth children on the march, unable to conceal their throes, or to take up and swaddle the new-born babes; they were hauled along, in spite of all, hardly allowed even time to suffer, and the wretched infants were left where they fell, a prey for dogs and birds, as though this were the purpose of their appearance in the world.

“To such a pass had the Roman Empire come that, even within the

¹ The Huns were almost a whole year in Roman territory (Agath. v. ii. *sqq.*) See Clinton, *F. R. ad* 559 A.D.; but the date is doubtful, *see* above, note, p. 454.

precincts of the districts surrounding the imperial city, a *very small* number of barbarians committed such enormities. Their audacity went so far as to pass the long walls and approach the inner fortifications. For time and neglect had in many places dilapidated the great wall, and other parts were easily thrown down by the barbarians, as there was nought to repel them—no military garrison, no engines of defence, nor persons to employ such. Not even the bark of a dog was to be heard ; the wall was less efficiently protected than a pig-sty or sheep-cot. For the Roman armies had not continued so numerous as in the days of ancient Emperors, but had dwindled to a small number, and no longer were sufficient for the size of the State. The whole force should have been six hundred and forty-five thousand fighting men, but actually it hardly amounted to one hundred and fifty thousand. And of these, some were in Italy, others in Africa, others in Spain, others in Colchis, others at Alexandria and in the Thebaid, a few on the Persian frontier (where only a few were needed on account of the peace)."

The Huns encamped at Melantias, a village on the small river Athyras, which flows into the Propontis. Their proximity created a panic in Constantinople, whose inhabitants saw imminent the horrors of sieges, conflagrations, and famine. The terror was not confined to the lower classes ; the nobles trembled in their palaces, the Emperor was alarmed on his throne. All the treasures of the churches, which were scattered in the tract of country included between the Euxine and the Golden Horn, were either carted into the city or shipped to the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus. The undisciplined corps of the Scholarian guards, ignorant of real warfare, who were supposed to defend the gates, did not inspire the citizens with much confidence.

On this critical occasion Justinian appealed to his veteran general Belisarius to save the seat of empire. In spite of his years and feebleness Belisarius put on his helmet and cuirass once more, and he won greater glory among the men of his time by saving New Rome on the Bosphorus than he had won by recovering Old Rome on the Tiber. He relied chiefly on a small body of three hundred men who had fought with him in Italy ; the other troops that he mustered knew nothing of war, and they were more for appearance than for action. The peasants who had fled before the barbarians from their ravaged homesteads in Thrace accompanied the little army. He encamped at the village of Chettus, and employed the peasants in the congenial work of digging a wide trench round the camp. Spies were sent out to discover the numbers of the enemy, and at

night a large number of beacons were kindled in the plain with the purpose of misleading the Huns as to the number of the forces sent out against them. For a while they were misled, but it was soon known that the Roman army was small, and two thousand cavalry selected by Zabergan rode forth to annihilate it. The spies informed Belisarius of the enemy's approach, and he made a skilful disposition of his troops. He concealed two hundred peltasts and javelin-men in the woods on either side of the plain, close to the place where he expected the attack of the barbarians; the ambuscaders, at a given signal, were to shower their missiles on the hostile ranks. The object of this was to compel the lines of the enemy to close in, in order to avoid the javelins on the flank, and thus to render their superior numbers useless through inability to deploy. Belisarius himself headed the rest of the army; in the rear followed the rustics, who were not to engage in the battle, but were to accompany it with loud shouts and cause a clatter with wooden beams, which they carried for that purpose.

All fell out as Belisarius had planned. The Huns, pressed by the peltasts, thronged together, and were hindered both from using their bows and arrows with effect, and from circumventing the Roman wings. The noise of the rustics in the rear, combined with the attack on the flanks, gave the foe the impression that the Roman army was immense, and that they were being surrounded; clouds of dust obscured the real situation, and the barbarians turned and fled. Four hundred perished before they reached their camp at Melantias, while not a single Roman was mortally wounded. The camp was immediately abandoned, and all the Huns hurried away, imagining that the victors were still on their track. But by the Emperor's orders Belisarius did not pursue them.

We must now follow the fortunes of the Hunnic troops who were sent against the Chersonese. Germanus, the son of Dorotheus, a native of Prima Justiniana, had been appointed some time previously commandant in that peninsula, and he now proved himself a capable officer. As the Huns could make no breach in the great wall, which shut in the peninsula, and was skilfully defended by the dispositions of Germanus, they resorted to the expedient of manufacturing boats of reeds fastened together in sheaves; each boat was large

enough to hold four men; one hundred and fifty were constructed, and six hundred fully armed soldiers embarked secretly in the bay of Aenus (near the mouth of the Hebrus), in order to land on the south-western coast of the Chersonese. Germanus learned the news of their enterprise with delight, and immediately manned twenty galleys with armed men.

The armament of reed-built boats was easily annihilated, not a single barbarian escaping. This success was followed up by an excursion of the Romans from the wall against the army of the dispirited besiegers; the latter abandoned their enterprise and joined Zabergan, who was also retreating after the defeat at Chettus.

Soon after this the other division of the Huns, which had been sent in the direction of Greece, returned without having achieved any signal success. They had not penetrated farther than Thermopylae, where the garrison of the fort that commanded the pass prevented their advance.

Thus, although Thrace, and presumably also Macedonia and Thessaly, suffered terribly from this invasion, Zabergan was unsuccessful in all three points of attack, owing to the ability of Belisarius, Germanus, and the garrison of Thermopylae. Justinian redeemed the captives for a considerable sum of money, and the Cotrigurs retreated beyond the Danube. But the wily Emperor laid a trap for their destruction. He despatched a characteristic letter to Sandichl, the friendly king of the Utrigurs, whose friendship he had cultivated by periodical presents of money. He informed Sandichl that the Cotrigurs had invaded Thrace and carried off all the gold that was destined to enrich the treasury of the Utriguric monarch. "It would have been easy for us," ran the imperial letter, "to have destroyed them utterly, or at least to have sent them empty away. But we did neither one thing nor the other, because we wished to test your sentiments. For if you are really valiant and wise, and not disposed to tolerate the appropriation by others of what belongs to you, you are not losers; for you have nothing to do but punish the enemy and receive from them your money at the sword's point, as though we had sent it to you by their hands." The Emperor further threatened that, if Sandichl proved himself craven enough to let the insult pass, he would transfer his amity to the Cotri-

gurs. The letter had the desired effect; the seeds of discord were sown; the Utrigurs were stirred up against their neighbours, and a series of ceaseless hostilities wasted the strength of the two nations.¹

After the repulse of the Huns, Belisarius lived in high honour at Constantinople, but was perhaps an object of suspicion to Justinian. A conspiracy to murder the Emperor was discovered in November 562, and one of the names mentioned by a culprit who confessed was that of the general, now nearly seventy years old. His age did not serve to acquit him of treasonable designs, and he remained in disgrace for eight months, until July 563, when he was restored to favour. The great Patrician died in March 565,² his wife, Antonina, who had already passed the age of eighty, surviving him; but his riches passed to Justinian, who died in the following November.³

¹ A short account of this transaction will be found in a fragment, probably of the Chronicle of Malalas, but included by Müller (*F. H. G.* iv.) in the fragments of John of Antioch,—evidently taken from Agathias. Menander (fr. 3) states that Sandichl promised to deprive the Cotrigurs of their horses, and thereby disable them for the invasion of Roman territory. In 562 there was another invasion of Huns (Theoph. 6054 A.M.) Anastasiopolis was taken by them (April).

² For the conspiracy in which Belisarius was said to be implicated, see Malalas and Theophanes. The legend that Belisarius ended his days as a blind beggar in the streets of Byzantium is, as has been suggested, possibly due to a confusion with John of Cappadocia, of whom it is related that he begged for pence (Proc. *B. P.* i., ἀρτον ἢ ὀβολὸν ἐκ τῶν προσπιπτόντων). The authori-

ties for the story are lines of Joannes Tzetzes and a passage in the *Antiquitates Constantinopolitanae*, whose author is not known, but perhaps flourished at the beginning of the twelfth century. See the second Appendix in Finlay's *History of Greece*, vol. i., where the evidence for, and origin of, the story are discussed. A similar story is told of Symbatius the Armenian, son-in-law of Michael III, in the ninth century; one of his eyes was put out, his right hand cut off, and he was set in a public place with a vessel in his lap to receive the pence of the charitable.

Another legend prevailed in the West as to the end of Belisarius. According to Fredegarius (*Hist. Franc. Epit.* cap. 50), he was slain by the Franks in Italy, and this tale was adopted by Aimoin.

³ 14th November, *Chron. Pasch.* (and Clinton); 11th November, Theophanes.

END OF VOL. I

A HISTORY
OF THE
LATER ROMAN EMPIRE

FROM ARCADIUS TO IRENE

(395 A.D. TO 800 A.D.)

BY

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VOL. II

London
MACMILLAN AND CO.

AND NEW YORK

1889

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CHAPTER VII

THE LANGUAGE OF THE ROMAIOS IN THE SIXTH CENTURY

Disuse of Latin—Three kinds of Greek: (1) the vulgar dialect, (2) the language of the educated, (3) the written language—Use of the words *Roman* and *Latin*—Latin words Graecised: βασιλεύς, *Hellene*, *barbarian*, *pagan*, etc. Pages 167-174

CHAPTER VIII

LITERATURE OF THE SIXTH CENTURY

Last Greek philosophers—John Philoponus—Cosmas Indicopleustes—Historians—Procopius—Agathias—Menander—Writings of Justinian—John the Lydian—Poetry—Agathias—Paul the Silentiary—Latin literature—Cassiodorus—Boethius 175-194

BOOK V

THE HOUSE OF HERACLIUS

CHAPTER I

PHOCAS

Character of the reign of Phocas—Persian invasions—Revolts in Syria and Egypt—Conspiracies of Constantina's party—Africa—Expedition of Heraclius and fall of Phocas 197-206

CHAPTER II

HERACLIUS (610-622 A.D.)

Critical situation of the Empire—Character of Heraclius—His cautious policy—His marriages—Persian invasions—Loss of Palestine and Egypt—Heraclius' policy in regard to the Jews—Embassy to Chosroes—The true cross—Heraclius' project of making Carthage the capital—Sergius the Patriarch—Reforms of Heraclius—Loan from the Church—Treachery of the Avars—Peace with Avars—Preparations for the Persian war 207-226

CHAPTER III

THE PERSIAN WAR

- (1) Campaign of Cappadocia and Pontus, 622-623 A.D.—(2) First campaign of Azerbiyan, 623 A.D.—(3) Campaign of Albania and Armenia, 624 A.D.—(4) Campaign of Cilicia, 625 A.D.—Battle of the Sarus—(5) The second campaign of Azerbiyan—The victory of Theodorus—The siege of Constantinople, 626 A.D.—(6) Campaign of Assyria, 627-628 A.D.—Battle of Gaugamela—Overthrow of Chosroes—*Heraciad* of George of Pisidia—Mistakes in policy after the peace with Persia—Shahr Barz Pages 227-248

CHAPTER IV

MONOTHELETISM

- Doctrine of One Energy—Sergius—Cyrus of Phasis—Sophronius—Pope Honorius—*Ecthesis* 249-253

CHAPTER V

LITERATURE IN THE REIGN OF HERACLIUS

- Theophylactus Simocatta—George of Pisidia 254-257

CHAPTER VI

DISMEMBERMENT OF THE EMPIRE BY THE SARACENS

- Arabia before Mohammed—Mohammed—The Koran—Battle of Muta—Al Wakidi—Conquest of Syria—Battles of Adjnadein and the Yermuk—Fall of Antioch, Jerusalem, etc.—Battle of Cadesia and conquest of Persia—Foundation of Bassra and Kufa—Conquest of Egypt by Amru—Foundation of Cairo (Fostât)—Death of Heraclius 258-273

CHAPTER VII

THE SLAVONIC SETTLEMENTS IN ILLYRICUM AND THRACE

- Extension of the Slovenes—Origin of the Croatians—Invasion of Dalmatia—Foundation of Spalato, Ragusa, etc.—The Croatians and Serbians—Slaves of Macedonia and Thessaly—Tribes around Salonica—Settlements in Greece 274-280

CHAPTER VIII

CONSTANS II

Reign of Constantine III and Heraclonas—Death of Constantine—Martina—Revolt of Valentinus and elevation of Constans II—Flight of Pyrrhus—Fall of Martina and Heraclonas—Speech of Constans—Saracen hostilities—Battle of Phoenix—Contest of Ali and Muavia—Peace with the Saracens—Expedition against the Slaves—The *Type*—Lateran Synod—Fortunes of Pope Martin—Policy and aims of Constans—His brother Theodosius—Constans goes to the West—Siege of Beneventum and battle of the Calor—Constans at Rome and Syracuse—His death—The tyrant Mizizios—Estimate of Constans and of his policy—Revolt of Saborios—The Saracens at Amorium Pages 281-307

CHAPTER IX

CONSTANTINE IV

Constantine Pogonatos—Anatolic theme—Great siege of Constantinople—"Romaic" fire—Peace with the Saracens—Embassies come to Constantinople from western powers—Ecclesiastical affairs—Sixth Ecumenical Council—Anathema on Pope Honorius 308-319

Note on Greek fire 319

CHAPTER X

JUSTINIAN II

Unpopularity—Removes the Mardaites—"Supernumerary corps" of Slaves—Battle of Sebastopolis—Armenia—Policy of transplanting peoples—The finance ministers Stephanus and Theodotus—History of financial bureaux—Buildings of Justinian—Quinisext Council—Justinian overthrown by Leontius—Conjecture that Justinian II desired to imitate Justinian I. 320-330

CHAPTER XI

FOUNDATION OF THE BULGARIAN KINGDOM

The Bulgarians—Legend of Kbrat and his five sons—The historical Kbrat—Bulgarians revolt against Avars—Bulgarians in Onglos—They defeat Constantine IV and settle in Moesia—Treaty with Constantine—Features of Slavonic history—Bulgarian institutions—Bulgarian war of Justinian II—Great (or Black) Bulgaria—Macedonian Slaves—Siege of Salonica 331-338

CHAPTER XII

ORIGIN OF THE SYSTEM OF THEMES

Treatise of Constantine VII—Origin of later *themes*—Justinian's reforms preparatory to the theme system—What we learn from Theophanes and Nicephorus—Theory as to the origin of the Asiatic themes—Armeniacs, Anatolics, etc.—System of Leo III Pages 339-351

CHAPTER XIII

TWENTY YEARS OF ANARCHY

General survey—Reign of Leontius—Loss of Africa—Tiberius III—Armenia—Cyprus—Cherson—Adventures of Justinian Rhinotmetos—Restoration of Justinian—Bulgarian war—Loss of Tyana—Justinian's vengeance on Cherson—His fall—His expedition against Ravenna—Philippicus—Anastasius II—Revolt of the Opsikians—Theodosius III—Adventures of Leo the Isaurian in Alania—His operations against the Saracens—Fall of Theodosius—General reflections 352-386

CHAPTER XIV

SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS DECAY IN THE SEVENTH CENTURY

Prevalence of superstition—Ecclesiastical complexion of the Empire—Coronation oath—Decline of culture—Study of Greek in western Europe—Theodore of Tarsus—Morality of the clergy—Survivals of paganism—Paulicianism
387-398

BOOK VI

THE HOUSE OF LEO THE ISAURIAN

CHAPTER I

THE REPULSE OF THE SARACENS

Constantinople besieged by the Saracens—Egyptian Christians desert—Plague in the army of the besiegers—Siege raised—Disasters of the Saracen fleet—Importance of this event—Caliph Hischam—Battle of Acroinon—Successes of Constantine V against the Moslem—Fall of the Omeyyad dynasty
401-407

CHAPTER II

THE ADMINISTRATION OF LEO III

Conspiracy of Artemius—Artavasdos—Birth, coronation, and marriage of Constantine—Revolt in Sicily—Leo's policy of reform—The *Ecloga*—Its ecclesiastical complexion—Tendencies of Roman law—*Ecloga* contrasted with Code of Justinian—Marriage laws—*Patria potestas*—Maritime Code—Agricultural Code—Disappearance of the colonate—Causes thereof—Military and financial reforms of Leo—Aberration in the chronology of the eighth century—Hypothesis to account for it—Taxes—Finance officers . . . Pages 408-424

Note on the chronology of the eighth century 425-427

An explanation and defence of the author's revision of the chronology from 727 to 773 A.D.

CHAPTER III

THE ICONOCLASTIC MOVEMENT

The true significance of the iconoclasm of Leo and Constantine—Rationalism—Connection with Monotheletism, Paulicianism, and Islamism—Decree of Leo—The *Antiphonetes*—Educational policy of Leo—The Ecumenical Doctor—Opposition of Germanus—The *silentium* of 729 A.D.—Revolt of Greece—The *Helladikoi* 428-438

CHAPTER IV

IMPERIAL ITALY IN THE EIGHTH CENTURY

Effects of iconoclasm on the history of Italy—Gregory II and the exarchs—Council of 727 A.D.—Liutprand and the Lombard dukes—Gregory III—Churches of southern Italy and Sicily separated from Roman see—Flight of iconodule Greeks westward—Legend of the Hodêgêtria—Graecisation of southern Italy 439-449

CHAPTER V

CONSTANTINE V

Revolt of Artavasdos—The great plague—Effects thereof in Greece and in Byzantium—The Slaves in Greece—Restoration of the aqueduct of Valens—Economic policy of Constantine—His family 450-458

Genealogical table of the Isaurian dynasty 459

CHAPTER VI

ICONOCLASTIC POLICY OF CONSTANTINE

Hostility of Constantine to monasticism—His merry court—Attitude to art—Council of 753 A.D.—Persecution of monks—Stephanus—Michael Lachanodrakon—The population question—Secularising of monastic property—The *charistic* system—The Patriarch Constantinos . . . Pages 460-469

CHAPTER VII

BULGARIA

Succession of Bulgarian kings—Kormisoš—Teletz—Expeditions of Constantine against Bulgaria—*Scamars*—Telerig—Death of Constantine V—Expeditions of Constantine VI 470-476

CHAPTER VIII

LEO IV

Ecclesiastical policy—Creation of the Caesars—Saracen war—Death of Leo 477-479

CHAPTER IX

CONSTANTINE VI AND IRENE

Conspiracies of the Caesars—Revolt of Elpidius—Struggle of Irene and Constantine—The Armeniac theme—Constantine divorces Maria—Constantine blinded—Stauracius and Aetius—Charles the Great—Fall of Irene—Saracen war 480-493

CHAPTER X

THE REACTION AGAINST ICONOCLASM

Paul the Patriarch—Tarasius the Patriarch—Letters of Pope Hadrian—Iconoclasm in the army—Seventh Ecumenical Council 494-498

CHAPTER XI

THE POPES, THE LOMBARDS, AND THE FRANKS

Appeal of the Popes to the mayors of the palace—Their relations with Liutprand—Pipin the Patrician—Desiderius—Charles the Great conquers the Lombard kingdom—Donation of Charles to the Roman see—Charles and Hadrian—Council of Frankfurt—Coronation of Charles and foundation of the Western Roman Empire—Significance of this event 499-509

CHAPTER XII

THE GEOGRAPHICAL ASPECT OF EUROPE AT THE END OF
THE EIGHTH CENTURY

The Empires and the caliphates—Comparison of the Roman Empire and the Frank kingdom in eighth century—The Moslem in Gaul; in Spain—Extension of Frank power—The Franks in Italy—*Lombardy*—The *Romagna*—Principality of Beneventum—Venice—Bulgaria—The functions of the rival Empires compared Pages 510-517

CHAPTER XIII

SOCIETY IN THE EIGHTH CENTURY

Literature revived—Theodore Studites—John of Damascus—Superstition—Effects of the iconoclastic reforms—Attractions of monastic life—The abbot Plato and Theoctiste—Life of Theodore—Theophanes—Armenian and Slavonic elements—Metropolitan arrangements of Byzantium—Private life—Saracen civilisation—Bagdad—Orientalism of Byzantium—Romances—Tale of Barlaam and Josaphat 518-534

CHAPTER XIV

CONCLUSION

Function performed by the later Roman Empire—It was the bulwark of Europe against the Asiatic danger—It kept alive Greek and Roman culture—It maintained European commerce—It preserved the idea of the *Roman Empire*—It embodied a principle of permanence 535-540

INDEX 541-579

CHAPTER XII

THE SLAVES

IN one respect the history of Byzantium, as the capital of the Roman world, differed little from its history as a Greek republic. Both as the mercantile commonwealth and as the imperial city, it was exposed, with its adjoining territory, to the hostilities of the barbarians of various races who infested the wild and ill-known lands of the Balkan mountains or dwelled on the shores of the Danube. In fact, Polybius' remarks on the favourable site of Byzantium seawards and its unfavourable aspect landwards hold good of its subsequent experiences, and the following passage might be taken as a short summary of one side of Byzantine history¹ :—

“As Thrace surrounds the territory of the Byzantines on all sides, reaching from sea to sea, they are involved in an endless and troublesome war against the Thracians, for it is not feasible, by making preparations on a grand scale and winning one decisive victory over them, to get rid once for all of their hostilities ; the barbarous nations and dynasts are too numerous. If they overcome one, three more worse than the first arise and advance against their country. Nor can they gain any advantage by submitting to pay tribute and making definite contracts ; for if they make any concession to one prince, such a concession raises up against them five times as many foes. For these reasons they are involved in a never-ending and troublesome war. For what is more dangerous than a bad neighbour, and what more dreadful than a war with barbarians ? And besides the other evils that attend on war, they have to undergo (to speak poetically) a sort of Tantalean punishment, for when they have diligently tilled their land, which is very fertile, and have been rewarded by the production of an abundant and surpassingly fine crop, then come the

¹ Polybius, iv. 45.

barbarians, and having reaped part of the fruits to carry off with them, destroy what they cannot take away. The Byzantines can only murmur indignantly, and endure."

This passage might have been written of the depredations of the Huns, the Ostrogoths, the Avars, or the Slaves.

Of these four peoples, the first three were only comets of ruin in the Balkan peninsula, while the Slavonic peoples, to whose early history this chapter is devoted, probably began to filter into the provinces of Illyricum and Thrace as settlers before the invasions of Attila, and in later times pouring in as formidable invaders, gradually converted those provinces into Slavonic principalities, which, according to the tide of war, were sometimes dependent on, sometimes independent of, the government of Constantinople.

To understand the history of the Haemus countries, the extension of the Slavonic races there, and the campaigns of the Roman armies against the invaders, a general notion of the very difficult and still imperfectly explored geography of Thrace is indispensable.¹

We may consider Mount Vitoš, and the town of Sardica, now Sofia, which lies at its base as the central point of the peninsula. Rising in the shape of an immense cone to a height of 2300 metres, Vitoš affords to the climber who ascends it a splendid view of the various complicated mountain chains which diversify the surrounding lands—a view which has been pronounced finer than that at Tempe or that at Voden. In the group of which this mountain and another named Ryl, to southward, are the highest peaks, two rivers of the lower Danube system, the Oescus (Isker) and the Nišava have their sources, as well as the two chief rivers of the Aegean system, the Hebrus (Maritsa) and the Strymon (Struma).

From this central region stretches in a south-easterly direction the double chain of Rhodope, cleft in twain by the valley

¹ In the geography, as throughout this chapter, the invaluable work of C. Jiriček, *Die Geschichte der Bulgaren*, has been my guide. I have also consulted the famous *Slawische Alterthümer* (ed. Wuttke) of P. J. Safarik, esp. vol. ii. p. 152 *sqq.* ("Uebersicht der Geschichte der bulgarischen Slawen"). Drinov's *Zaselenie balkanskago poluostrova Sla-*

vanyami is unfortunately out of print. A lucid account of the divisions of the Slavonic race will be found in Mr. Morfill's article "Slavs" in the *Ency. Brit.*, an article which is not only very learned but very readable. In the present chapter we have only to do with the south-eastern Slaves (chiefly Slovenes).

of the Nestos (Mesta). The easterly range, Rhodope proper, forms the western boundary of the great plain of Thrace, while the range of Orbelos separates the Nestos valley from the Strymon valley.

The great Haemus or Balkan chain which runs from east to west is also double, like Rhodope, but is not in the same way divided by a large river. The Haemus mountains begin near the sources of the Timacus and Margus, from which they stretch to the shores of the Euxine. To a traveller approaching them from the northern or Danubian side they do not present an impressive appearance, for the ascent is very gradual; plateau rises above plateau, or the transition is accomplished by gentle slopes, and the height of the highest parts is lost by the number of intervening degrees. But on the southern side the descent is precipitous, and the aspect is imposing and sublime. This capital difference between the two sides of the Haemus range is closely connected with the existence of the second and lower parallel range, called the *Srêdna Gora*, which runs through Roumelia from Sofia to Sliven. It seems as if a convulsion of the earth had cloven asunder an original and large chain by a sudden rent, which gave its abrupt and sheer character to the southern side of the Haemus mountains, and interrupted the gradual incline upwards from the low plain of Thrace.

The important chain of *Srêdna Gora*, which is often confounded with the northern chain of Haemus, is divided into three parts, which, following Hochstetter, we may call the *Karadža Dag*h, the *Srêdna Gora*, and the *Ichtimane*r. The *Karadža Dag*h mountains are the most easterly, and are separated from *Srêdna Gora* by the river *Strêma* (a tributary of the *Maritsa*), while the valley of the *Tundža* (*Taívapos*), with its fields of roses and pleasantly situated towns, divides it from Mount Haemus. *Srêdna Gora* reaches a greater height than the mountains to east or to west, and is separated by the river *Topolnitsa* from the most westerly portion, the *Ichtimane*r mountains, which form a sort of transition connecting the Balkan system with the Rhodope system, whilst at the same time they are the watershed between the tributaries of the *Hebrus* and those of the Danube. It is in this range too that the important pass of *Succi* is situated, through which

the road led from Constantinople to Singidunum, Sirmium, and Italy.

The river Isker divides the Balkan chain into a western and an eastern half. Of the western mountains, which command a view of the middle Danube, we need only mention the strange region which Kanitz, the Austrian traveller, discovered near the fort of Bêlgradčik. "Gigantic pillars of dark red sandstone, crowned by groups of trees, rise in fantastic shapes to heights above 200 metres, and, separated by rivulets and surrounded by luxuriant green, they form remarkable groups and alleys, as it were a city changed to stone, with towers, burgs, houses, bridges, obelisks, and ships, men and beasts."¹

In the central part of the eastern Haemus mountains is the now celebrated pass of Šipka, which connects the valley of the Tundža with the valley of the Jantra (Jatrus), and is the chief route from Thrace into Lower Moesia. Between this spot and the pass of Sliven farther east extend the wildest and most impervious regions of the Balkans, regions which have always been the favourite homes of scamars and klephts, who could defy the justice of civilisation in thick forests and inaccessible ravines—regions echoing with the wild songs and romances of outlaw life. Beyond the pass of the Iron Gates (Πύλαι Σιδηραί, Demir Kapu), connecting Sliven with Trnovo, the range splits itself into three prongs; the north prong touching the river of the Great Kamčija, the middle touching the meeting of the Great and the Little Kamčija, and the southern touching the sea. In this part there are three passes, one of which is reached from Sliven, the other two from Karnabad.

The east side of the great Thracian plain is bounded by the Strandža range, which separates it from the Euxine, and throws out in a south-westerly direction the Tekir Dagħ, which stretches along the west of the Propontis, shooting into the Thracian Chersonese and extending along the north Aegean coast as far as the Strymon. The Thracian plain is a flat wilderness, only good for poor pasture.

The oldest inhabitants, of whose existence in the peninsula we know, were a branch of the Indo-European family, which is generally called the Thraco-Illyrian branch, falling as it does

¹ I translate from Jiriček, *op. cit.* p. 8.

into two main divisions, the Thracian and the Illyrian. The Thracians occupied the eastern, the Illyrians the western, side of the peninsula, the boundary between them being roughly the courses of the Drave and the Strymon. Any descendants of the Thracians who still survive are to be found among the Roumanians, while the Albanians¹ represent the Illyrians and Epirotes. The Epirotes stood in much the same relation to the Illyrians as the Macedonians stood to the Thracians. Of the numerous Thracian tribes (Odrysiens, Triballi, Getae, Mysians, Bessi, etc.), the Bessi or Satri, in the region of Rhodope, remained longest a corporate nation in the presence of Roman influences; they were converted to Christianity² in the fourth century, and in the fifth century they still held the church service in their own tongue. The Noropians, a subdivision of the Paeonians, whose lake dwellings are described by Herodotus, deserve mention, because the name survived in the Middle Ages (*nerop'ch*, *mêrop'ch*) as the name of a class of serfs in the Serbian kingdom. Of the Illyrian tribes the most important were the Autariats, Dardanians, Dalmatians, Istrians, Liburnians. As to the Thracian and Illyrian languages, a general but vague idea can be formed of them by the help of modern Albanese, whence Dalmatia has been explained to mean "shepherd land"; Skodra, "hill"; Bora, "snow" (a mountain in Macedonia); Bessi, "the faithful" (originally the name of priests); Dardania, "land of pears," etc. The difficulty experienced by the Romans in subduing and incorporating in their Empire all these brave mountain tribes is well known.

It must be clearly understood that Latin became the general language of the peninsula when the Roman conquests were consolidated, except on the south and east coast-lines of the Aegean, Propontis, and Euxine, where the towns, many of them Greek colonies and all long familiar with Greek, continued to speak that language. That Latin was the language of the greater part of the peninsula there are many proofs. Priscus tells us expressly, in speaking of his expedition to the country of the Huns, that Latin was the language everywhere. The bishops of Marcianopolis used Latin in their

¹ Hahn finds the descendants of the Illyrians in the Gegi of north Albania, those of the Epirotes in the Toski of

south Albania, the river Škumli separating them.

² By Nicetas, bishop of Remesiana.

correspondence with the council of Chalcedon. At the end of the sixth century words used by a peasant are recorded, which are the first trace of the Roumanian language, which developed in these regions and was born of the union of Latin with old Thracian.¹ The Emperor Justinian, a native of Dardania, speaks of Latin as his own language.

We need not discuss here the wild theories, resting chiefly on accidental similarity of names which may be made to prove anything, that Slavonic races dwelled along with the Thraco-Illyrian from time immemorial; they have been refuted by Jiriček. The pedantic Byzantine custom of calling contemporary peoples by the name of ancient peoples who had dwelt in the same lands led to a misunderstanding, and originated the idea that the Slavonic races were autochthonous.²

But if this theory assigns to the presence of the Slaves a too early period, we must beware of falling into the opposite mistake of setting their advent too late. The arguments of Drinov, which are accepted by the historian of the Bulgarians, make it possible that the infiltration of Slavonic elements into the cis-Danubian lands began about 300 A.D., before the so-called wandering of the nations.

It is probable enough that there were Slaves in the great Dacian kingdom of Decebalus, which was subverted by Trajan. At all events, the Roman occupation of Dacia beyond the Danube for a century and a half between Trajan and Aurelian, left its traces in that country, and also among Slavonic races; for Trajan or Trojan figured prominently in Slavonic legend as the deliverer from the Dacian oppressor, and was even deified. "Bulgarian songs at the present day celebrate the Tzar Trojan, the lord of inexhaustible treasures, for whom burning gold and pure silver flow from seventy wells."³ Slavonic tradition called the Romans Vlachians, and the first appearance of the Vlachians beyond the Danube was long remembered.

The Slaves doubtless played a considerable part in the frontier wars of the third century, but whether the Carpi, whom

¹ See Jiriček, p. 66, where he collects these points. Nicetas, bishop of Remesiana (fourth century), who converted the Bessi, was a Latin writer.

² Thus the Servians are called *Tri-*

balli, the Albanese *Acarmanians*, the Hungarians *Pannonians*, etc.

³ Trajan is a usual name among the Bulgarians. The name of the old Slavonic feast day, Koleda, is said to be derived from Kalendae.

Galerius settled along with the Bastarnae in the provinces of Moesia and Thrace (298) were a Slavonic race, as some authorities believe, we cannot be certain. It is possible, however, that Slaves formed part of the large mass of barbarians—200,000—to whom the Emperor Carus assigned habitations in the peninsula; and there are certainly distinct traces of the existence of Slavonic communities in itineraries composed in the fourth century.¹ There were many generals of Slavonic origin in Roman service in the fifth century, and in the sixth century Procopius has preserved to us many names of Slavonic towns.

We are then, I think, justified in assuming that in the fifth century there was a considerable Slavonic element in the lands south of the Ister, holding the position of Roman *coloni*. They formed a layer of population which would give security and permanence to the settlements of future invaders of kindred race. And here we touch upon what seems a strong confirmation of the conclusion to which stray vestiges lead us, regarding an early Slavonic colonisation. The Ostrogoths, who invaded and settled in Italy, held out there but a short time; the duration of Lombard influence in Italy was longer, but not long; the Vandals were soon dislodged from Africa. On the other hand, the Franks held permanent sway in the lands in which they settled, just as Slavonic nations still dominate the countries between the Adriatic and the Euxine. Now the main difference between the conquest of Gaul by the Franks and the conquest of Italy by the Ostrogoths was, that the former had been preceded by centuries of gradual infiltration of Frank elements in the countries to the west of the Rhine, whereas for Theodoric there was no such basis on which to consolidate a Gothic kingdom. The natural induction is that the cause whose presence secured the permanence of the Frank kingdom in Gaul, and whose absence facilitated the disappearance of the Gothic race from

¹ The credit of pointing out this belongs to Drinov. Zemae = modern Tzema, on the Hebrus; Beodizum = Voditza, in the *Itiner. Hieron.* and *Itiner. Anton.* Šafarik (ii. 159) places the first Slavonic settlements south of Danube at the end of the fifth century. Mr. Bryce's researches have discredited

the Slavonic origin of Justinian (*Uprav-da*), which was often adduced in proof of early Slave settlements. But this piece of evidence may be replaced by another, if my explanation of the name *Belisarius* as Slavonic (White Dawn) is correct; see above, vol. i. p. 341

Italy, co-operated to render permanent the Slavonic conquests. This induction, of course, is not strict; we have not excluded the possibility of like effects resulting from different causes, and the case of the Visigoths in Spain is an obvious, though explicable, exception. But the fact that we have distinct traces of early Slavonic settlements supplements the defect of the *a priori* induction. The circumstance that there is no direct mention of such settlements by writers of the time can have little weight in the opposite scale; such things often escape the notice of contemporaries.¹

The great political characteristic of the Slavonic races was their independence, in which they resembled the Arabs. They could not endure the idea of a monarch, and the communes, independent of, and constantly at discord with, one another, united only in the presence of a dangerous enemy. Owing to this characteristic their invasions cannot have been efficiently organised, and an able general should have been able to cut them off in detachments. The family, governed and represented by the oldest member, was the unit of the commune or tribe; the chiefs of the community, whose territory was called a *župa*, were selected from certain leading families which thus formed an aristocracy.

The character of the Slaves is described by a Greek Emperor as artless and hospitable; but it was often, no doubt, the artlessness of a heathen barbarian. They practised both agriculture and pasture. Physically they were tall and strong, and of blond complexion. Women occupied an honourable position, and the patriarchal character of their social life, by which the family was the proprietor and every individual belonged to a family, excluded poverty. Only an excommunicated person could be poor, and therefore to be poor meant to be bad, and was expressed by the same word.² In the sixth century their abodes were wretched hovels, and their chief food was millet.

The Emperor Maurice, in his treatise on the art of war,³

¹ Jiriček mentions a similar case in the seventeenth century, when the great migration of Serbs from Servia to the Banat and south Russia took place without being mentioned by a historian of the time.

² Jiriček, p. 97.

³ *Μαυρικίου στρατηγικόν*, published at Upsala, 1664, by J. Scheffer, along with Arrian's *Tactics*. This is the only existing edition, and is very rare. The imperial treatise is divided into Twelve Books, and the subject of the eleventh is the customs and tactics of various

gives us an account of the Slavonic methods of warfare. They were unable to fight well in regular battle on open ground, and thus they were fain to choose mountains and morasses, ravines and thickets, in which they could arrange ambushes and surprises, and bring into play their experience of forest and mountain life. In this kind of warfare skill in archery was serviceable, and they used poisoned arrows. Their weapons in hand-to-hand fight were battle-axes and battle-mallets. Maurice advises that campaigns against them should be undertaken in the winter, because then the trees are leafless and the forests less impenetrable to the view, while the snow betrays the steps of the foe, and the frozen rivers give no advantage to their swimming powers. It was a common device of a hard-pressed Slovene to dive into a river and not emerge, breathing through a reed whose extremity was just above the surface. It required long experience and sharp eyes to see the end of the reed and detect the fugitive.

The Slaves believed in a supreme God, Svarog, the lord of lightning, who created the world out of the sand of the sea; in lesser gods, among whom was reckoned Trajan; and in all sorts of supernatural beings, good and bad (Bogy and Besy); for instance, in *vlkodlaks* or vampires, from which the modern Greek *βρουκόλακας* is borrowed, in lake nymphs (*judi*) a sort of long-haired mermaids who draw down fishermen entangled in their locks to the depths below. The most interesting of these beings are the Samovili or Samodivi, who live and dance in the mountains. "They hasten swiftly through the air; they ride on earth on stags, using adders as bridles and yellow snakes as girdles. Their hair is of light colour. They are generally hostile to men, whose black eyes they blind and quaff," but they are friends of great heroes, and live with them as sworn sisters.¹

Until the last years of the fourth century, when the Visigothic soldiers took up their quarters in the land and exhausted it, the Balkan peninsula had enjoyed a long peace; and after the

foreign nations. He groups Teutonic peoples together as *ξανθὰ ἔθνη*. In Bk. vii. cap. 1, he says that Huns and Scythians should be attacked in February or March, because their horses are then

in bad condition on account of winter hardships (p. 137).

¹ *Posestrinnen*, that is in the relation of *Povratimstvo*, a sworn brotherhood of young men like that of Orestes and Pylades, or Amis and Amile.

final departure of Alaric for Italy, it was allowed almost forty years of comparative freedom from the invasions of foes to recover its prosperity. But the rise of the Hunnic monarchy under Attila in the countries north of the Danube meant that evil days were in store for it; and the invasions of the barbarian Attila, a scourge far worse than the raids of Alaric, reduced the plains and valleys of Thrace and Illyricum to uncultivated and desert solitudes, the inhabitants fleeing to the mountains. And when the Hunnic empire, that transitory phenomenon which united many nations loosely for a moment without any real bonds of law or interest, was dissipated, the races which had belonged to it, Germans and Slaves and Huns, hovered on the Danube watching their chance of plunder. The chief of these were the Ostrogoths, who, while they were a check on the Huns and on Germans more uncivilised than themselves, infested the lands of the Haemus, Illyria, and Epirus, until in 588 Theodoric, like Alaric, went westwards to a new home. The departure of the Ostrogoths was like the opening of a sluice; the Slaves and Bulgarians, whom their presence had kept back, were let loose on the Empire, and began periodical invasions. It must be noted that, beside the Ostrogoths, some non-German nations had settled in corners; the Satages¹ and Alans in Lower Moesia, and Huns in the Dobrudža.

I have already mentioned what is known of these invasions in the reign of Anastasius, and how that Emperor built the Long Wall to protect the capital. The invasions continued in the reign of Justinian and throughout the sixth century, but the Bulgarians soon cease to be mentioned, and it appears probable that they were subjugated by the neighbouring Slaves.

No real opposition was offered to the invasions of the barbarians, until Mundus the Gepid, who afterwards assisted in quelling the Nika insurgents, defeated and repelled the Bulgarians in 530. For the following years, until 534, the Haemus provinces enjoyed immunity from the plunderers, owing to the ability of Chilbudius, master of soldiers in Thrace, who was appointed to defend the Danube frontier, and to the measures which were taken for strengthening the fortifications.

¹ They were perhaps Slaves, as Šafarik conjectures; cf. Sotáks in north Hungary.

Besides the outer line of strong places on the river, an inner line of defence was made in 530, connecting Ulpiana and Sardica. But, in 534 the death of Chilbudius in a battle with the Slaves left the frontier without a capable defender, and the old ravages were renewed.¹ A grand expedition in 540 penetrated to Greece, but the Peloponnesus was saved by the fortifications of the isthmus. Cassandrea, however, was taken, and the invaders crossed from Sestos to the coast of Asia Minor. The havoc wrought in this year throughout Thrace, Illyricum, and northern Greece was so serious that Justinian set about making new lines of defence on an extensive scale, which will presently be described.

Two Slavonic tribes are mentioned at this period, the Slovenes² and the Antai or Wends. They did not differ from each other in either language or physical traits³; both enjoyed kingless government of a popular nature, both worshipped one God, both were intolerant of the Greek and oriental conception of fate. Procopius relates that about this time hostilities arose between the two tribes, and the Slovenes conquered the Antai; but it has been conjectured that this is an ill-informed foreigner's account of a totally different transaction, namely the reduction of the Slavonic tribes by the Bulgarians. However this may be, it is certain that the Bulgarians (whom Procopius calls Huns), the Slovenes, and the Antai were in the habit of invading the Empire together, and that some bond must have united the two different races. It is to be observed, however, that it is the Slaves who are always in the foreground from this time forth, and that the Bulgarians are almost never mentioned; whence the reverse relation, namely the conquest of the Bulgarians by the Slaves, might seem more probable. Those Bulgarians of the sixth century had, it must be remembered,

¹ An account of the impostor who pretended to be Chilbudius, and the offer made by Justinian to the Antai that they should settle in Turris (perhaps Turnu Magurel, as Šafarik, ii. 153, and Jiriček suggest) will be found in Procopius, *B. G.* iii. 14. Theophanes records an expedition of two Bulgarian princes (ῥῥῥῥῥ) in 6031 A.M. = 538-539 A.D., against Moesia and Scythia. Justin, the commander in Moesia, was slain (cf. Malalas, p. 437, 19, ed. Bonn).

² The settlements of the Slovenes were probably in the old trans-Istrian province of Dacia. It is said that their descendants in this country were incorporated among the Roumanians, who migrated from the south in the Middle Ages.

³ According to Procopius, *B. G.* iii. 14. The Wends of Lausitz belong to the "western" division of the Slavonic family.

nothing to do with the foundation of the Bulgarian kingdom, which took place in the seventh century.

In 546 another Slavonic incursion took place, but on this occasion Justinian's principle of "barbarian cut barbarian" came into operation, and they were repulsed by the Heruls. Two years later the Slaves overran Illyricum with a numerous army, and appeared before Dyrrhachium, and in 551 a band of three thousand crossed the Danube unopposed and divided into two parties, of which one ravaged Thrace and the other Illyricum. Both were victorious over Roman generals; the maritime city of Toperus was taken; and the massacres and cruelties committed by the barbarians make the readers of Procopius shudder.¹ In 552 the Slaves crossed the Danube again, intent on attacking Thessalonica, but the terror of the name of Germanus, who was then at Sardica preparing for an expedition to Italy, caused them to abandon the project and invade Dalmatia. At the beginning of Justinian's reign Germanus had inflicted such an annihilating defeat on the Antai that the Slaves looked upon him with fear and awe.² The great expedition of Zabergan and the Cotrigur Huns (whom Roesler calls Bulgarians) in 558 was probably accompanied by Slavonic forces.

It is at this point that the Avars, whose empire considerably influenced the fortunes of the Slaves, appear on the political horizon of the West. But as their presence did not affect the Roman Empire until after the death of Justinian, we may reserve what is to be said of them for a future chapter.

The wall of Anastasius had been the first step to a system of fortifications for defending the peninsula. Justinian carried out the idea on an extensive scale by strengthening old and building new forts in Thrace, Epirus, Dardania, Macedonia, Thessaly, and southern Greece.

To protect Thrace there was first of all a line of fifty-two fortresses along the Danube, of which Securisma (or Securisca) and others were founded by Justinian, while the rest were strengthened and improved. South of the Danube, in Moesia, there were twenty-seven strong fortresses. On the Sea of Marmora Rhoedestus was built, a steep and large sea-washed town, while Perinthus (Heraclea) was provided with new walls.

¹ See *B. G.* iii. 38; for the incursion of the preceding year, see iii. 33.

² *Ib.* 40.

The walls that hedged in the Thracian Chersonese were restored. Sestos was made impregnable, and a high tower was erected at Elaiûs. Further west Aenus, near the mouth of the Hebrus, was surrounded with walls; while north-westward, in the regions of Rhodope and the Thracian plain, one hundred and three castles were restored. Trajanopolis (on Hebrus), Maximianopolis, and Doriscus were secured with new walls; Ballurus was converted into a fortified town; Philippopolis and Plotinopolis, on the Hebrus, were restored and strengthened; while Anastasiopolis was secured by a cross wall (*διατείχισμα*).

The middle Danube was in the same way lined with castles and fortified towns, protecting the frontier of Illyricum; the most important were Singidon (Singidunum, now Belgrade), Octavum, eight miles to the west, Pincum, Margus, Viminacium, Capus, and Novae. In Dardania, Justinian's native province, eight new castles were built, and sixty-one of older date restored. When invaders had penetrated this second line of fortresses they entered Macedonia, where a third system of strong defences obstructed their path. We are told that forty-six forts and towers were restored or built in this district. Among those which were restored may be mentioned Cassandrea, which had been taken by the Slovenes, and among those which were newly built we may note Artemisium in the neighbourhood of Thessalonica.

From Macedonia an invader might pass either southwards into Thessaly or westwards into Epirus. In Thessaly the fortified towns of Demetrias—the "fetter of Greece"—Thebae, Pharsalus, Metropolis, Gomphi, and Tricca formed a line of works across the country. The walls of Larissa were restored by Justinian, and new towns, Centauropolis, on Mount Pelion, Eurymene, and Caesarea (probably new), testified to the Emperor's anxiety to protect his subjects. If an enemy wished to proceed into Greece—supposing that he had succeeded in entering the Thessalian plains—it was necessary for him to overpower or elude the garrison of two thousand men who were stationed in the fortresses that guarded the memorable defile of Thermopylae. These fortresses were restored and strengthened, the walls were made higher and more solid, the bastions and battlements were doubled, and cisterns were provided for the use of the garrison. The town of Heraclea, not

far from Thermopylae, was also the object of imperial solicitude; the Euripus was protected by castles; the walls of Plataea, Athens, and Corinth were renewed, and the wall across the isthmus was solidified and improved by watch-towers (*φυλακτήρια*). If, on the other hand, the foe turned his course westward, Justinian had secured those regions by erecting thirty-two new forts in the New Epirus, twelve new forts in the Old Epirus, and rehabilitating about twenty-five in each province.

In regard to this elaborate system of fortification, which was a conspicuous and not dishonourable feature of Justinian's reign, we must notice that he adopted an architectural innovation.¹ Old-fashioned fortresses had been content with single towers, and were hence called *μονοπύργια*: the new erections of Justinian were on a larger scale, and were crowned with many towers. It was probably found that the barbarians, who had learned a little about the art of besieging since they came into contact with the Empire, were not baffled by the one-towered battlements, and that stronger forts were necessary.

We cannot hesitate to assume that these measures of Justinian were of great service for resisting the Slavonic and subsequent Avaric invasions. But it must be observed that some of them were intended as barriers not only against external invaders, but also against barbarians who had settled within the boundaries of the Empire. This, we are told expressly,² was the case with the renovation of Philippopolis and Plotinopolis. We cannot doubt that these barbarian settlers were Slaves.

¹ *ὑποδομήσατο καινούργιας* is an expression often employed. Procopius' work "on Edifices" is our source for these fortifications.

² Proc. *de Aed.* iv. 5.

12. 1. 21.

CHAPTER IV

SLAVES AND AVARS IN ILLYRICUM AND THRACE

THE great Slavonic movement of the sixth and seventh centuries was similar in its general course to the great German movement of the fourth and fifth. The barbarians who are at first hostile invaders become afterwards dependent, at least nominally dependent, and christianised settlers in the Empire; and as they always tend to become altogether independent, they introduce into it an element of dissolution. Slaves too are employed by the Romans for military service, though not to such an extent as were the Germans at an earlier date.

This resemblance is not accidental; it is due to the natural relations of things. But it is curiously enhanced by the circumstance that just as the course of the German movement had been interrupted or modified by the rise of the Hun empire of Attila in the plains which are now called Hungary, so the course of the Slavonic movement was modified by the establishment of the Avar empire, in the latter half of the sixth century, in the same regions. And as the power of the Huns, after a brief life, vanished completely, having received its death-blow mainly from Germans, so the power of the Avars, after a short and formidable existence, was overthrown early in the seventh century by the Slaves, for whom the field was then clear. The remnant of the Avars survived in obscure regions of Pannonia until the days of Charles the Great.

The Avars probably belonged to the same Tartaric group as the Huns of Attila. In the last years of Justinian's reign, about the time of the invasion of the Cotrigurs, they first appeared on

the political horizon of the West. They had once been tributaries of the Turk in Asia, and having thrown off his authority had travelled westward; but we are assured that they had no right to the name of Avars, and that they were really only Wars or Huns, who called themselves Avars, a name of repute and dread, in order to frighten the world.¹ These pseudo-Avars persuaded Justinian to grant them subsidies,² in return for which they performed the service of making war on the Utrigurs, the Zali, and the Sabiri. But while Justinian paid them, and they professed to keep off all enemies from Roman territory, their treacherous designs soon became apparent; they invaded Thrace (562), and refused to accept the home which the Emperor offered them in Pannonia Secunda. In this year Bonus was stationed to protect the Danube against them, as Chilbudius in former times had protected it against the Slaves.

At first the Avars were not so formidable as they afterwards became. They harried the lands of the Slaves (*Antae*) who dwelled beyond the Danube,³ but they did not venture at first to harry the lands of the Romans. When Justin refused to continue to pay the subsidy granted by Justinian,⁴ they took no steps for redress, and, turning away from the Empire, directed their arms against the Franks and invaded Thuringia, a diversion which had no consequences.

But now a critical moment came, and a very curious transaction took place which had two important results. The Lombard king Alboin made a proposal to Baian, the chagan or king of the Avars, that the two nations should combine to overthrow the kingdom of the Gepids, over whom Cunimund then reigned. The conditions were that the Avars should receive half the spoil and all the territory of the Gepids, and also, in case the Lombards secured a footing in Italy, the land of Pannonia, which the Lombards then occupied. The last condition is curious, and, if it was more than a matter of form, remarkably naïve; the Lombards must have known that, in the event of their returning, they would be obliged to recover

¹ Theophylactus, vii. 8; he calls them *Ψευδαβάρεις*.

² *Sarosius*, the lord of the Alans, "introduced" the Avars to Justin, who was stationed as general in Lazica; and Justin introduced them to his uncle. The ambassador of the Avars on this

occasion was Kandich. See Menander, frags. 4, 5.

³ See Menander, fr. 6, who relates the murder of the Antic ambassador Mezamer by the Avars.

⁴ For Justin's refusal, see above, p. 72.

their country by the sword. The character of the Gepids seems to have been faithless; but the diplomacy of Justinian had succeeded in rendering them comparatively innocuous to the Empire. Justin now gave them some half-hearted assistance; but they succumbed before the momentary combination of Avars and Lombards in the year 567.

The two results which followed this occurrence were of ecumenical importance: the movement of the Lombards into Italy (568), and the establishment of the Avars in the extensive countries of the Gepids and Lombards, where their power became really great and formidable, and the Roman Empire had for neighbours a Hunnic instead of a German people,—*colubrimodis Abarum gens nexa capillis*.

The chagan, Baian, was now in a position to face the Roman power and punish Justin for the contemptuous rejection of his demands. From this time forward until the fall of the Avar kingdom there is an alternation of hostilities, and treaties, for which the Romans have to pay. At the same time the Balkan lands are condemned to suffer from constant invasions of the Slaves, over whom the Avars acquire an ascendancy, though the relation of dependence is a very loose one. At one time the Avars join the Romans in making war on the Slaves, at another time they instigate the Slaves to make war on the Romans; while some Slavonic tribes appear to have been occasionally Roman allies.¹ The Slaves inhabited the larger part of the broad tract of land which corresponds to modern Walachia²; while the Avar kingdom probably embraced most of the regions which are now included in Hungary.

The great object of the Avars was to strengthen their new dominions by gaining possession of the stronghold of Sirmium, an invaluable post for operations against the Roman provinces. As, however, Bonus held it with a strong garrison, they could not think of attacking it, and were obliged to begin hostilities by ravaging Dalmatia. An embassy was then sent to Justin, demanding the cession of Sirmium, and also the pay that Justinian used formerly to grant to the Cotrigur and Utrigur Huns, whom they had subdued. It is to be observed that they claimed to be looked upon as the successors of the Gepids.

¹ The Antae or Wends, see Theophylactus, viii. 5, 13. (602 A.D.)

² See Roesler, *Rom. Stud.* p. 323.

Their demands were refused; but when Tiberius, who afterwards became Emperor, was sent against them and suffered a defeat, the disaster led to the conclusion of a treaty, which seems to have been preserved for the next few years, and the Romans paid 80,000 pieces of gold.

We may notice that in these transactions a difference is manifest between the policy of Justin and the would-be policy of Tiberius. Justin is bellicose, and refuses to yield to the Avars, whereas his general is inclined to adopt the old system of Justinian and keep them quiet by paying them a fixed sum. We may also notice a circumstance, which we might have inferred without a record, that the Haemus provinces, over which a year seldom passed without invasions and devastations, were completely disorganised and infested by highwaymen. These highwaymen were called *scamars*, a name which attached to them for many centuries; and shortly after the peace of 570 they were bold enough to waylay a party of Avars.¹

For the next four years we hear nothing of Avar incursions, nor is anything recorded of the general Tiberius. We may suppose that he resided at Constantinople, ready to take the field in case of need; and in 574, when the enemy renewed their importunities for the cession of Sirmium, he went forth against them, and was a second time defeated. Before the end of the year he was created Caesar, and, as he determined to throw all the forces of the realm into the Persian war, he agreed to pay the Avars a yearly tribute of 80,000 pieces of gold.

But now the Slaves, who for many years seem to have caused no trouble to the Romans, began to move again, and in 577 no less than a hundred thousand poured into Thrace and Illyricum. Cities were plundered by the invaders and left desolate. As there were no forces to oppose them, a considerable number took up their abode in the land and lived at their pleasure there for many years.² It is from this time that we

¹ *Σκαμάρεις* (Menander, fr. 35). The earliest instance of the word, as far as I know, is in Eugippius' *Life of Severinus*. See vol. i. Bk. iii. p. 286. In the seventh century the word occurs in the Lombard laws; in the eighth century we shall hear of the *scamars* in the reign of Constantine V.

On this occasion Tiberius forced the robbers to give some satisfaction to the Avars.

² John of Ephesus, vi. cap. 25; cf. Menander, fr. 47 *ad fin.*, where Thrace is said to have been ravaged, and the number of Slaves is stated to have been 100,000; and fr. 48: *κεραιζομένης τῆς*

must date the first intrusion of a Slavonic element on a considerable scale into the Balkan peninsula.

It was a critical moment for the government, and the old policy of Justinian, which consisted in stirring up one barbarian people against another, was reverted to. An appeal for assistance was made by John the prefect of Illyricum to the chagan of the Avars, who had his own reasons for hostility towards the unruly Slaves, and he consented to invade their territory.¹ The Romans provided ships to carry the Avar host across the Ister, and the chagan burned the villages and ravaged the lands of the Slaves, who skulked in the woods and did not venture to oppose him.

But Baian had not ceased to covet the city of Sirmium, and the absence of all the Roman forces in the East was too good an opportunity to lose. In 579 he encamped with a large army between Singidunum (Belgrade) and Sirmium, pretending that he was organising an expedition against the Slaves, and swearing by the Bible as well as by his own gods that he entertained no hostile intention against Sirmium. But he succeeded in throwing a bridge over the Save and came upon Sirmium unexpectedly; and as there were no provisions in the place, and no relief could be sent, the city was reduced to such extremities that Tiberius was compelled to agree to its surrender (581). A peace was then made, on condition that the Avars should receive 80,000 aurei annually.

The loss of Sirmium is a turning-point in the history of the peninsula, as it was the most important defence possessed by the Romans against the barbarians in western Illyricum.

¹ Ἑλλάδος ὑπὸ Σκλαβηνῶν καὶ ἀπανταχόσε ἀλλεπαλλήλων αὐτῇ ἐπηρητημένων τῶν κινδύνων, on which account Tiberius, not having sufficient forces at his disposal, applied to Baian. The words of John of Ephesus are: "The same year (581) was famous also for the invasion of an accursed people called Slavonians, who overran the whole of Greece and the country of the Thessalonians and all Thrace, and captured the cities and took numerous forts, and devastated and burnt, and reduced the people to slavery, and made themselves masters of the whole country, and settled in it by main force, and dwelt in it as though it had been their own without fear.

And four years have now elapsed and still . . . they live at their ease in the land, and dwell in it, and spread themselves far and wide, as far as God permits them, and ravage and burn and take captive. . . . And even still (584) they encamp and dwell there."

¹ The chief of the Slaves was Daurantius, that is Dovrat, Menander, fr. 48. He had put to death the ambassadors of the Avars, and thus Baian had a private reason for his expedition. There was another invasion of the Slaves in 579, see Johannes Biclarensis, *Chronicon* in Roncalli's collection, ii. p. 389.

The shamelessness of the Avaric demands now surpassed all bounds. When Maurice came to the throne he consented to increase the tribute by 20,000 pieces of gold, but in a few months the chagan demanded a further increase of the same amount, and this was refused.¹ Thereupon (in summer 583) the Avars seized Singidunum, Viminacium, and other places on the Danube, which were ill defended, and harried Thrace, where the inhabitants, under the impression that a secure peace had been established, were negligently gathering in their harvest. Elpidius, a former praetor of Sicily, and Comentiolus, one of the bodyguard, were then sent as ambassadors to the chagan, and it is recorded that Comentiolus spoke such "holy words" to the Lord Baian² that he was put in chains and barely escaped with his life. In the following year (584) a treaty was concluded, Maurice consenting to pay the additional sum which he had before refused.

It was, however, now plain to the Emperor that the Avars had become so petulant that payments of gold would no longer suffice to repress their hostile propensities, and he therefore considered it necessary to keep a military contingent in Thrace and modify the arrangement of Tiberius, by which all the army, except garrison soldiers, were stationed in Asia. Accordingly, when the Slaves, instigated by the Avars, invaded Thrace soon after the treaty, and penetrated as far as the Long Wall, Comentiolus had forces at his disposal, and gained some victories over the invaders, first at the river Erginia, and afterwards close to the fortress of Ansinon in the neighbourhood of Hadrianople.³ The barbarians were driven from Astica, as the region was called which extends between Hadrianople and Philippopolis, and the captives were rescued from their hands.

The general tenor of the historian's account of these Slavonic depredations in 584 or 585 implies that the depredators were not Slaves who lived beyond the Danube and returned thither after the invasion, but Slaves who were

¹ The Emperor sent the chagan, at his own request, an elephant and a golden bed, but both were sent back disdainfully to the donor (Theophyl. i. 8).

² I adopt this expression, used of Marina and the Lord Lysimachus in

Pericles, as a sort of modern parallel to the curious expression of Theophylactus, who says that Comentiolus spoke boldly, "*θαλαμεύων* the Romaic freedom like a chaste wife."

³ Ardagast was the leader of the Slovenes.

already settled in Roman territory. Comentiolus' work consisted in clearing Astica of these lawless settlers.¹ It is a vexed question whether the Slaves also settled in northern Greece and the Peloponnesus as early as the reign of Maurice. There is evidence to show that the city of Monembasia, so important in the Middle Ages, was founded at this time on the coast of Laconia, and it seems probable that its foundation was due to Greek fugitives from the Slaves, just as Venice is said to have been founded by fugitives from the Huns.²

In autumn (apparently 585) the peace was violated. The chagan took advantage of the pretext that a Scythian magician,³ who had indulged in carnal intercourse with one of his wives and was fleeing from his wrath, had been received by Maurice in Constantinople. The Emperor replied to the Avar demonstrations by imprisoning the chagan's ambassador Targitios⁴ in Chalcis, an island in the Propontis, for a space of six months, because he presumed to ask for the payment of money while his master was behaving as an enemy.

The provinces beyond the Haemus, Lower Moesia, and Scythia, were harried by the Avars, indignant at the treatment of their ambassador (586). The towns of Ratiaria, Dorostolon, Zaldapa, Bononia,—there was a Bononia on the Danube as well as in Italy and on the English Channel,—Marcianopolis, and others⁵ were taken, but the enterprise cost the enemy much trouble and occupied a considerable time.⁶

Comentiolus was then appointed general, perhaps *magister militum per Illyricum*, to conduct the war against the Avars.

CAMPAIGN OF 587.—The nominal number of the forces under the command of Comentiolus was 10,000; but of these only 6000 were capable soldiers. Accordingly he left 4000 to guard the camp near Anchialus, and divided the

¹ Compare especially Theophylactus' expression, τῆς Ἀστικῆς αὐτῆς ἀπελαύ-
νεται (i. 8, p. 53).

² See Phrantzes, p. 398 (ed. Bonn).
See Note at the end of this chapter.

³ He was called *bookolabras* = magician. He seems to have been a Turk by race.

⁴ Targites was the name of the Avaric ambassador who visited Byzantium

after Justin's accession.

⁵ The others were Akys, Pannasa, and Tropaeum. It is impossible to identify all the small places in the highlands of Moesia and Thrace.

⁶ Hopf refers the notice of Evagrius, vi. 10—a passage much discussed in the Fallmerayer controversy—to the Avar expeditions of 583 and 586 (587). See Note at the end of this chapter.

fighting men into three bands, of which the first was consigned to Martin, the second to Castus, and the third he led himself.

Castus proceeded westward towards the Haemus mountains and the city of Zaldapa, and falling in with a division of the barbarian army, cut it to pieces. Martin directed his course northwards to Tomi, in the province of Scythia, where he found the chagan and the main body of the enemy encamped on the shore of a lake. The Romans surprised the chagan's camp, but he and most of the Avars escaped to the shelter of an island. Comentiolus himself accomplished nothing; he merely proceeded to Marcianopolis, which had been fixed on as the place of rendezvous for the three divisions. When the six thousand were reunited they returned to the camp, and taking with them the four thousand men who had been left there, proceeded to a place called Sabulente Canalin, whose natural charms are described by Theophylactus, in the high dells of Mount Haemus.¹ Here they awaited for the approach of the chagan, who, as they knew, intended to come southwards and invade Thrace. It would appear that the spot in which the Romans encamped was close to the most easterly pass of Mount Haemus.

In the neighbourhood of Sabulente there was a river which could be crossed in two ways, by a wooden bridge, or, apparently higher up the stream, by a stone bridge.² Martin was sent to the vicinity of the bridge to discover whether the Avars had already crossed, while Castus was stationed at the other passage to reconnoitre, and, in case the enemy had crossed, to observe their movements. Martin soon ascertained that the barbarian host was on the point of crossing, and immediately returned to Comentiolus with the news. Castus, having

¹ Somewhere in the vicinity of Anchialus. The passage in Theophylactus does not state directly, but leads us to suppose that Sabulente Canalin was in the most easterly extremities of the Haemus range, near Anchialus (vi. 5, *ad init.* γίνεται οὖν ἡμέρα τρίτη εἰς τὸ λεγόμενον Σαβουλέντε Κανάλιν εἰτα τῇ Ἀγχιάλῳ προσέμεινεν). Otherwise one might identify it with the region of Kazanlyk, in the neighbourhood of the Sipka pass. Perhaps the Avars crossed the Balkan range by the pass of Luda Kamčija. It would be interesting to

know whence Theophylactus derived his description of the amenities of Sabulente. Did he visit it himself? was it described to him by another? or is it merely a rhetorical description, such as might have been written as an exercise (*μελετή*) by Choricus, and equally applicable to any other spot? Evagrius, whose later years were contemporary with the youth of Theophylactus, has left us a picturesque description of Chalcedon.

² τὴν λιθίνην διάβασιν; this can hardly mean stepping-stones.

crossed to the ulterior bank, met some outrunners of the Avars, and cut them to pieces; but instead of returning to the camp by the way he had come, he pressed on in the direction of the bridge, where he expected to fall in with Martin. He was not aware that the foe were already there. But the distance was too long to permit of his reaching the bridge before nightfall, and at sunset he was obliged to halt. Next morning he rode forward and suddenly came upon the Avar army, which was defiling across the bridge. To escape or avoid observation seemed wellnigh impossible, but the members of the little band instinctively separated and sought shelter in the surrounding thickets. Some of the Roman soldiers were detected and were cruelly tortured by their captors until they pointed out where the captain himself was concealed in the midst of a grove.¹ Thus Castus was taken prisoner by the enemy.

The want of precision in the narrative of the historian and the difficulty of the topography of the Thracian highlands make it impossible to follow with anything like certainty the details of these Avaric and Slavonic invasions. The chagan, after he had crossed the river, divided his army into two parts, one of which he sent forward to enter eastern Thrace by a pass near Mesembria.² This pass was guarded by 500 Romans, who resisted bravely, but were overcome. Thrace was defended only by some infantry forces under the command of Ansimuth, who, instead of opposing the invaders, retreated to the Long Wall, closely followed by the foe; the captain himself, who brought up the rear, was captured by the pursuers.

The other division of the Avars, which was led by the chagan himself, probably advanced westward along that intermediate region which lies between the Haemus range and the Srédna Gora, and crossed one of the passes leading into western Thrace.

Comentiolus, who had perhaps also moved westward after the chagan along Mount Haemus, descended by Calvomonte and Libidourgon to the region of Astica. It was on this occasion, perhaps as they were defiling along mountain passes, that the

¹ οἷά πως ἐπιφυλλίδα τινα ἐν μέσῳ τῆς
ὄλης ἀποκρυπτόμενον.

² Probably the pass of Nadir Derbend
or Boghazdere.

baggage fell from one of the beasts of burden, and the words, "torna torna fratre" (turn back, brother),¹ addressed by those in the rear to the owner of the beast, who was walking in front, were taken up along the line of march and interpreted in the sense of an exhortation to flee from an approaching enemy. But for this false alarm the chagan might have been surprised and captured, for he had retained with himself only a few guards, all the rest of his forces being dispersed throughout Thrace. Even as it was, the Avars who were with him fell in unexpectedly with the Roman army, and most of them were slain.

After this the forces of the Avars were recalled and collected by their monarch, who for the second time had barely escaped an imminent danger. They now set themselves to besiege the most important Thracian cities. They took Moesian Appiaria, but Diocletianopolis, Philippopolis, and Hadrianopolis withstood their assaults.²

An incident characteristic of those days determined the capture of Appiaria. A soldier named Busas, who happened to be staying in the fortress, had gone out to hunt, and "the huntsman became himself a prey." The Avars were on the point of putting him to death, but his arguments induced them to prefer the receipt of a rich ransom. Standing in front of the walls, the captive exhausted the resources of persuasion and entreaty, enumerating his services in warfare, and appealing to the compassion of his fellow-countrymen to redeem him from death; but the garrison of the town, under the influence of a man whose wife was reputed to have been unduly intimate with Busas, were deaf to his prayers. Indignant at their callousness, the captive did not hesitate to rescue his own life by enabling the Avars to capture the town, and at the same time he had the gratification of avenging himself on the unfeeling defenders of Appiaria. He instructed the ignorant barbarians how to construct a siege-engine, and by this means the fortress was taken.

While the enemy were besieging Hadrianople, Maurice

¹ Theophylactus only mentions *τόρνα*, Theophanes adds *φράτερ* or *φράτρε*. The words possess considerable interest, as the earliest extant specimen of the Roumanian or Walachian language,

the eastern daughter of Latin; cf. Roesler, *Romänische Studien*, p. 106.

² Evag. vi. 4; Theophyl. ii. 15, 16, 17. Theophylactus apparently thought that Appiaria was south of Mount Haemus.

appointed to the post of general in Thrace John Mystacon, who had formerly commanded in the Persian war; and Mystacon was assisted by the ability and valour of a captain named Drocton, of Lombard origin. In a battle at Hadrianople the Avars were routed, and compelled to retreat to their own country. Shortly before this event Castus had been ransomed.

The misfortunes of the army of Comentiolus and the capture of Castus seem to have produced a spirit of insubordination in the capital, and increased the unpopularity of Maurice. Abusive songs were circulated, and though the writer of the panegyrical history of this reign makes light of the persons who murmured, and takes the opportunity of praising the Emperor's mildness in feeling, or at least showing, no resentment, yet the mere fact that Theophylactus mentions the murmurs proves that they were a notable signification of the Emperor's unpopularity, especially as the events which caused the discontent were not directly his fault.

During 588 the provinces of Europe seem to have enjoyed rest from the invaders, but in 589 Thrace was harried by Slaves, and apparently Slaves who lived permanently on Roman soil.¹

The position of affairs was considerably changed when in the year 591 peace was made with Persia, and Maurice was able to employ the greater part of the forces of the Empire in defending the European provinces. He astonished the court by preparing to take the field himself, for an Emperor militant had not been seen since the days of Theodosius the Great. The nobles, the Patriarch, his own wife and children, assiduously supplicated him to give up his rash resolve; but Maurice was firm in his determination. His progress as far as Anchialus is described by the historian of his reign²; but

¹ Theoph. iii. 4: τὸ δὲ Γετικόν, ταῦτόν δ' εἰπεῖν αἱ τῶν Σκλαυνηῶν ἀγέλαι τὰ περὶ τὴν Θράκην ἐς τὸ κάρτερον ἐλυμαίνοντο. We are told by Evagrius that the mutiny of the soldiers in the East against Priscus seemed a favourable opportunity for incursions.

² We may note the stages of Maurice's journey to Anchialus: (1) Hebdomon; (2) Selymbria, where he took ship for

Heraclea, but was driven by a storm into port at (3) Daonion, where he spent the night. Thence he rode to Heraclea (Perinthus), where he visited the church of the Martyr Glyceria; and advancing four parasangs northwards he encamped at (4) a pleasant and populous place, not named. The next halting-place was in the neighbourhood of (5) Enaton, where the

when he arrived there the tidings that a Persian embassy was awaiting him recalled him to the capital, and his speedy return seems to have been also caused by signs and portents. This ineffectual performance of Maurice, who had never been popular with the army, discredited him still more in the eyes of the troops; they had now a plausible pretext for regarding him with contempt. He was skilled in military science, and wrote a treatise on tactics; but henceforward the soldiers doubtless thought that he might be indeed a grand militarist "who had the whole theoric of war in the knot of his scarf," but that certainly his "mystery in stratagem" was limited to theory.

I may mention an incident which occurred in the progress of Maurice, and which transports us for a moment to the habitations of a curious, if not fabulous, people on the Baltic Sea. The attendants of the Emperor captured three men who bore no weapons, but carried in their hands musical instruments. Being questioned by their captors, they stated that they were Slaves who dwelled by the "western ocean."¹ The chagan of the Avars had requested their people to help him in his wars, and these three men had been sent as envoys by the ethnarchs or chiefs of their tribes, bearing a message of refusal. Their journey had occupied the almost incredible period of fifteen months. The chagan had prevented them from returning home, and they had resolved to seek refuge with the Roman Emperor. They had no arms, because the territory in which they lived did not produce iron; hence their occupation was music, which, they said, was much more agreeable, and they lived in a state of continual peace. We are not told what subsequently became of these extraordinary Slaves, except that Maurice, struck with admiration at their splendid stature, caused them to be conveyed to Heraclea.

Emperor remained for three days and nights. While he was there the three musical Slaves were captured. On the fourth day he advanced, and while the retinue was crossing a narrow bridge over the stream of Xerogypson, in a marshy place, a confusion arose which forced the Emperor to dismount and preserve order with a staff. Two stadia (*σημεία*) beyond this bridge (6) he encamped for the night; and on the following day reached (7) Anchialus, where he abode a fortnight. It appears,

then, that the journey from Heraclea to Anchialus was equivalent to a four days' leisurely march for cavalry. It is evident that Maurice did not follow the high road, which ran by Drizipera, Hadrianople, and Tarpodizus, but marched due north from Heraclea, crossing the Strandža range probably somewhere near Bizya.

¹ This name was applied to the northern as well to the western seas of Europe.

When Maurice returned to Byzantium he was waited on not only by a Persian embassy but by two envoys, Bosos and Bettos, of a king of the Franks,¹ who proposed that the Emperor should purchase his assistance against the Avars by paying subsidies. Maurice consented to an alliance, but refused to pay for it.

During the last ten years of Maurice's reign hostilities were carried on both with the Avars and with the Slaves. As the narrative of our original authority, Theophylactus, is in some points chronologically obscure,² it will be most convenient to treat it in annual divisions.

(1) 591 A.D.—The operations of the Avars began at Singidon, as the Greeks called Singidunum, on the Danube. Having crossed the river in boats constructed by the labour of subject Slaves, the host of the barbarians laid siege to the city, but when a week had passed and Singidon still held out, the chagan consented to retire on the receipt of two thousand aurei, a gilt table, and rich apparel. It will be remembered that the capital of Upper Moesia had been captured by the Avars in 583; we must presume that they did not occupy it, for in that case its recapture by the Romans would certainly have been mentioned by the historian.

The chagan then directed his course to the region of Sirmium, where, with the help of his Slavonic boatbuilders, he crossed the Save; thence marching eastwards he approached Bononia on the fifth day. The chief passage of the Timavus (Timok) was at a place called Procliana, and here the advance guard of the Avars was met by the Roman captain Salvian with a thousand cavalry. Maurice had appointed Priscus "General of Europe," and Priscus had selected Salvian as his captain or "under-general." A severe engagement took place,

¹ Called Theodoric by Theophylactus. One of Childebert's sons was really named Theoderic, but Childebert did not die till 596, and so there must be a mistake either in the name or in the date. It seems easier to assume that Theophylactus erred in the name, but as far as we know from our other sources (Gregory of Tours and the letters in Bouquet, vol. iv.), the embassies between Childebert and Maurice related only to co-operation against

the Lombards and the restoration of Athanagild (see below, cap. vi.) M. Gasquet, assuming a double mistake, refers the embassy to 599 A.D., and supposes that by Theodoric (then king of Burgundia) his brother Theodebert, king of Austrasia, is meant (*L'empire byzantin*, p. 203).

² See a note by the author on the "Chronology of Theophylaktos Simokatta" in the *English Historical Review*, April 1888.

in which the Romans were victorious; and when on the following morning eight thousand of the enemy advanced under Samur to crush the small body of Salvian, the Avars were again defeated. The chagan then moved forward with his whole army, and Salvian prudently retreated to the camp of Priscus, of whose movements we are not informed.

Having remained some time at Procliana,¹ the Avars came to Sabulente Canalin,² and thence, having burnt down a church in the vicinity of Anchialus, entered Thrace, about a month after they had crossed the Danube. Drizipera, the first town they besieged in Thrace, is said to have been saved by a miracle, and, having failed here, the enemy marched to Heraclea, where the general of Europe was stationed. Priscus seems to have gradually fallen back before the advancing enemy, and now, when an engagement at length took place, he was routed. Retreating with the infantry to Didymoteichon, he soon shut himself up in the securer refuge of Tzurulon, where he was besieged by the chagan. In order to drive away the barbarians, the Emperor adopted an ingenious and successful stratagem. A letter was written, purporting to come from the Emperor and addressed to Priscus, in which the general was informed that a large force had been embarked and sent round by the Black Sea to carry captive the families of the Avars left unprotected in their habitations beyond the Danube. This letter was consigned to a messenger, who was instructed to allow himself to be captured by the enemy. When the alarming contents of the letter, whose genuineness he did not suspect, became known to the chagan, he raised the siege and returned as speedily as possible to defend his country, having made a treaty with Priscus, and received, for the sake of appearance, a small sum of money. In autumn Priscus retired to Byzantium, and the troops took up their winter quarters in Thracian villages.

(2) 592 A.D.—This year was remarkable for a successful

¹ Four days were spent at Procliana; three days were occupied with the march to Sabulente; and four days with the march to Drizipera, which was besieged for seven days. On the fifth day after the siege was abandoned, Heraclea was reached. The siege of Tzurulon lasted either seven or eleven

days (according as we interpret *ἐβδόμη ἡμέρα καί*, Theophylactus, vi. 5 *ad fin.*) Thus the whole campaign lasted about two months, probably August and September.

² Canalion, shortened colloquially to Canalin (*ω* for *ωω* is a feature of modern Greek).

expedition against the Slaves beyond the Ister, who, under the leadership of Ardagast, had been harrying Thrace. The Emperor had at length come to the conclusion that the invaders should be opposed at the Danube, and not, as the practice had been for the last few years, at the Haemus. Priscus, who continued to hold the position of commander-in-chief, and Gentzon, who had the special command of the infantry, collected the army at Heraclea and marched to Dorostolon,¹ or Durostorum, which is now Silistria, with the intention of crossing the river and punishing the Slaves in their own country. At Dorostolon, Koch, an ambassador of the Avars, arrived in the Roman camp, and remonstrated with Priscus on the appearance of an army on the Danube after the treaty which had been made at Tzurulon. It was explained that the expedition was against the Slaves, not against the Avars, and that the Slaves had not been included in the treaty. Having crossed the Ister, Priscus surprised the camp of Ardagast at midnight, and the barbarians fled in confusion. Ardagast himself was almost captured, for in his flight he was tripped up by the stump of a tree; but, fortunately for him, the accident occurred not far from the bank of a river. Plunging in its waves, perhaps remaining under water and breathing through a reed as the amphibious Slaves were wont to do, he eluded pursuit.

This victory was somewhat clouded by a mutiny in the army. When Priscus declared his intention of reserving the best of the spoils for the Emperor, his eldest son, and the rest of the imperial family, the soldiers openly showed their displeasure and disappointment at being put off with the refuse of the booty, or perhaps receiving none at all. Priscus, however, succeeded in soothing them, and three hundred soldiers, under the command of Tatimer, were sent with the spoils to Byzantium. On their way, probably in Thrace, they were assailed by a band of Slaves as they were enjoying the relaxation of a noonday rest. The plunderers were with some difficulty repulsed, and fifty were taken alive. It is plain that

¹ The march from Heraclea to Drizipera (Drusipara) occupied four days (*τέσσαρες ἡμέρας*), just the time in which the severe march was accomplished by the Avars in the preceding

year. Ten days were spent at Drizipera, and the journey thence to Dorostolon was performed in fifteen days. Thus the Danube was reached a month after the army had left Heraclea.

these marauders belonged to the Slaves who had permanently settled in Roman territory.

Priscus meanwhile sent his lieutenant Alexander across the river Helibakias to discover where the Slaves were hiding. At his approach the barbarians fled to a safe retreat in a difficult morass, where they could defy the Roman troops, who were almost lost in attempting to penetrate the marsh. The device of setting fire to the woody covert in which the fugitives were concealed failed on account of the dampness of the wood. But a Gepid Christian, who had associated himself with the Slaves, opportunely deserted and came to the aid of the foiled Alexander. He pointed out the secret passage which led into the hiding-place of the barbarians, who were then easily captured by the Romans. The obliging Gepid informed his new friends that these Slaves were a party of spies sent out by the King Musokios,¹ who had just learned the news of the defeat of Ardagast; and when Alexander returned triumphantly with his captives to Priscus, the crafty deserter, who was honoured with handsome presents, arranged a stratagem for delivering Musokios and his army into the hands of the Romans. The Gepid proceeded to the presence of the unsuspecting Musokios and asked him for a supply of boats to transport the remnant of the Slavonic army of Ardagast across the river Paspirion. Musokios readily placed at his disposal 150 monoxyles and thirty oarsmen, and he crossed the river. Meanwhile Priscus, according to the preconceived arrangement, was approaching the banks, and at midnight the Gepid stole away from the boatmen to meet the Roman army, and returned to the river with Alexander and two hundred soldiers. At a little distance from the bank he placed them in an ambush, and on the following night, when the time was ripe, and the barbarians, heavy with wine, were sunk in slumber, the Romans issued from their hiding-place, under the conduct of the Gepid. The signal agreed on was an Avaric song, and the soldiers halted at a little distance till their guide had made sure that all was safe. The signal was given, the boatmen were slaughtered as they slept, and the boats were in the possession of the Romans. Priscus transported three thousand

¹ τὸν λεγόμενον ῥήγα τῇ τῶν βαρβάρων φωνῇ (Theophyl. vi. 9 *ad init.*) The writer seems to be ignorant that *rex* is a Latin word.

men across the river, and at midnight Musokios, who, like his boatmen, was heavy with the fumes of wine—he had the excuse of celebrating the obsequies of a brother—was surprised and taken alive. The massacre of the Slaves lasted till the morning. But for the energy of the second officer, Gentzon, this success might have been followed by a reverse; the sentinels were careless, and some of the Slaves who escaped rallied and attacked the victors. Priscus gibbeted the negligent guards.

At this juncture Tatimer arrived with an imperative message from the Emperor, that the army should remain during the winter in the Slavonic territory. The unwelcome mandate would certainly have been followed by a mutiny on this occasion, and perhaps the events of 602 would have been anticipated by ten years, if the commander had been another than Priscus, who had always shown dexterity in managing intractable soldiers. Priscus did not comply with the wishes of Maurice; he broke up his camp and crossed the Ister. Hearing that the chagan of the Avars, indignant at the successes of the Romans, was meditating hostilities, he sent Theodore, a physician, as an envoy to the court of the barbarian. Theodore is said to have reduced to a lower key the arrogant tone of the chagan by relating to him an anecdote about Sesostris, and the barbarian said that all he asked was a share in the spoil which had been won from the Slaves. Priscus, in spite of the protests of the army, complied with the demand and sent him five thousand captives. For this “folly” he incurred the resentment of the Emperor, who some time previously had determined to depose Priscus and appoint his own brother Peter to the command in Europe.

(3) 593 A.D.¹—The new general, Peter, proceeded by Heraclia and Drizipera (Drusipara) to Odessus, where the army

¹ “Turning to Theophanes, whose sole authority for these wars was Theophylactus, we find that he has hammered out the metal thin, so as to make it extend over the years which are not accounted for. The first campaign of Priscus and the battle of Heraclia took place in 6084, that is 592; the expedition against the Slaves is placed in 593, the mission of Tatimer and the recall of Priscus in 594. The campaign of Peter is drawn out to extend over three

years—595, 596, 597—and thus the deposition of Peter at the end of 597 agrees with the date of Theophylactus, assuming that he assigned the decease of Johannes Jejunator to 594.” See the author’s note on the chronology of Theophylactus in the *English Historical Review*, April 1888, p. 312. The implication made in that article that Priscus spent the winter 592-593 beyond the Danube I believe, on second thoughts, to be erroneous.

accorded him a kind reception. But unfortunately he was the bearer of an imperial mandate, containing new dispensations, highly unwelcome to the soldiers, concerning the mode in which they were to be paid. The whole amount of the stipend was to be divided into three portions, of which one was to be delivered in clothes, another in arms, and the third in money. When the general read aloud the new ordinance all the soldiers with one accord marched out of the camp, leaving the general alone with the paper in his hands, and took up their quarters at a distance of about half a mile. But Peter was the bearer of other imperial commands also, which were of a more acceptable character, and he decided, by communicating these immediately, to calm the wrath of the soldiers at this attempt to cheat them of their pay. The angry troops were holding a seditious assembly, and loading the name of Maurice with objurgations, when Peter appeared and, procuring silence, informed them from an elevated platform, that the Emperor whom they reviled had resolved to release from service and to support at the public expense those soldiers who had exhibited special bravery and conspicuously endangered life and limb in the recent campaigns; and that he had also decreed that the sons of those who had fallen in battle were to be enrolled in the army list instead of their parents. At these tidings resentment was turned into gratitude, and the Emperor was extolled to the heavens. It is not stated, but it seems highly probable, that the new arrangement in regard to the mode of payment was not pressed; we are only told that Peter sent an official account of these occurrences to the Emperor.

Three days later the army moved westward to Marcianopolis, and on reaching that city Peter sent forward a reconnoitring body of one thousand cavalry under Alexander. These soon fell in with a company of six hundred Slaves, driving waggons piled up with the booty which they had won in depredations at the Moesian towns of Akys, Zaldapa, and Scopis. As soon as they saw the Romans, their first care was to put to death the male prisoners of military age; then, making a barricade of the waggons, they set the women and children in the enclosed space, and themselves stood on the carts brandishing their javelins. The Roman cavalry feared to approach, lest the darts of the enemy should kill the horses under them; but

their captain Alexander gave the command to dismount. The engagement which ensued was decided by the valour of a Roman soldier who, leaping up on one of the waggons, felled with his sword the Slaves who were nearest him. The barricade was then dissolved, but the barbarians were not destroyed themselves until they had slain the rest of their captives.

About a week later Peter, who lingered in this region perhaps for the pleasures of the chase, met with an accident in a boar hunt. The furious animal suddenly rushed upon him from a thicket, and in turning his horse he sprained his left foot, which collided with the trunk of a tree. The severe sprain compelled him to remain for a considerable time longer in the same place, to the disgust and indignation of Maurice, who seems to have regarded the cause as a pretext, and wrote chiding letters to his brother. Stung by the imperial taunts, Peter ordered the army to move forward, intending to cross the Danube and invade the territory of the Slaves, even as Priscus had invaded it in the preceding year. But two weeks later a letter from Maurice enjoined on him not to leave Thrace—Thrace is here used in the sense of the Thracian diocese, including Lower Moesia and Scythia—because it was reported that the Slaves were contemplating an expedition against Byzantium itself. Peter accordingly proceeded to Novae, passing on his way the cities of Zaldapa and Iatrus and the fortress of Latarkion. The inhabitants of Novae gave the general a cordial reception, and induced him to take part in the feast of the Martyr Lupus, which was celebrated on the day after his arrival.

On quitting Novae, Peter advanced along the Danube by Theodoropolis and Securisca—or, as it was generally called, Curisca—to Asemus, a city which had been always especially exposed to the incursions of the barbarians from beyond the river, and had therefore been provided with a strong garrison. A circumstance occurred here, which illustrates the quarrels that probably often arose between cities and generals, and which also shows that the firm temper of the men of Asemus had not changed since the days when they defended their city with triumphant valour against the Scythian host of Attila. Observing the splendid men who composed the garrison of Asemus, Peter determined to draft them off for his own army. The citizens

protested, and showed Peter a copy of the privilege which had been granted to them by the Emperor Justin. Peter, bent on carrying his point, cared little for the imperial document, and the soldiers of the garrison prudently took refuge in a church. Peter commanded the bishop to conduct them from the altar, and when the bishop declined to execute the invidious task, Gentzon, the captain of the infantry, was sent with soldiers to force the suppliants from the holy place. But the solemnity of the church presented so forcibly the deformity of the act which he was commanded to commit, that the captain made no attempt to obey the order, and Peter deposed him from his office. On the morrow a guardsman was sent to hale the disobedient bishop to the camp, but the indignant citizens assembled and drove the officer out. Then, shutting the gates, they extolled Maurice and reviled Peter, who deemed it best to leave the scene of his discomfiture without delay.

It is to be presumed that the army advanced westward; but we are merely told that a few days later a thousand horsemen were sent forward to reconnoitre. They fell in with a party of Bulgarians¹ equal in number to themselves. These Bulgarians, subjects of the Avars, were advancing carelessly, confiding in the peace which existed between the chagan and the Emperor. But the Romans assumed a hostile attitude, and when the Bulgarians sent heralds to deprecate a violation of the peace, the commander sent them to appeal to Peter, who was still about a mile behind the reconnoitring party.

Peter brooked as little the protest of the Bulgarians as he had brooked the protest of the men of Asemus, and sent word that they should be cut to pieces. But, though the barbarians had been unwilling to fight, they defended themselves successfully and forced the aggressors to flee; in consequence of which defeat the Roman captain was stripped and scourged like a slave. When the chagan heard of this occurrence he sent ambassadors to remonstrate with Peter, but the Roman general

¹ οὗτοι ἑκατοντάσι δέκα Βουλγάροις προσπίπτουσιν (Theophyl. vii. 4, 1). This passage is important; it shows that the Bulgarians maintained throughout the sixth century a distinct, though subordinate and dependent, existence in the neighbourhood of the

Danube, and upsets the theory, which Hopf affirms with certainty, that the Bulgarians who harried the Thracian provinces in the reign of Anastasius became completely amalgamated with the Slaves.

feigned complete ignorance of the matter and cajoled the Avars by plausible words.

At this point the narrative of the historian who has preserved the memory of these events suddenly transports us, without a word of notice, into a totally different region,—into the country beyond the Danube, where Priscus had operated successfully in 592. And he transports us not only to a different place, but to a different time; for, having recorded the ill success of Peter and his deposition from the command, he makes it appear, by a chronological remark, that these events took place at the end, not of 593, but of 597.¹

We are thus left in the dark concerning the events of 594, 595, and 596; while as to 597, we know that Peter was commander of the army, we know some of the details of an expedition against the Slaves beyond the Danube, and it appears probable that in this year the Avars invaded the Empire and besieged Thessalonica. From a Latin source we know that in 596 the Avars made an expedition against Thuringia.

(4) 597 A.D.—At the point where we are first permitted to catch sight of the operations of Peter in Sclavinia, as we may call the territory of the Slaves, he is sending twenty men across an unnamed river to spy the movements of the enemy. A long march on the preceding day had wearied the soldiers, and towards morning the twenty reconnoiters lay down to rest in the concealment of a thicket and fell asleep. Unluckily Peiragast, the chief of a Slavonic tribe, came up with a party of riders and dismounted hard by the grove. The Romans were discovered and taken, and compelled to reveal the intentions of their general as far as they knew them. Peiragast then advanced to the ford of the river and concealed his men in the woods which overhung the banks. Peter, ignorant of their proximity, prepared to cross, and a thousand soldiers, who had reached the other side, were surprised and hewn in pieces by the enemy, who rushed forth from their lurking-places. The general then determined that the rest of the army should cross, not in detachments, but in a united body, in the face of the

¹ Theophylactus, vii. 6, *ad init.* αὐθις γινόμεθα) Ἰωάννης (the Patriarch) πρὸ τεττάρων τοίνυν τούτων ἐνιαυτῶν . . . τὸν τῇδε βίον ἀπέλιπεν. (πρὸς γὰρ τὰ πρεσβύτερα τῆς ἱστορίας

barbarians who lined the opposite bank. Standing on their rafts in mid-stream, the Roman soldiers received and returned a brisk discharge of missiles, and their superior numbers enabled them to clear the bank of the Slaves, whose chief, Peiragast, was mortally wounded. As soon as they landed they completely routed the retreating adversaries, but want of cavalry rendered them unable to continue the pursuit. To explain this circumstance, we may conjecture that the thousand men who had crossed first and were slain by the Slaves were a body of horse.

On the next day the guides lost their way, and the army wandered about unable to obtain water. They were obliged to appease their thirst with wine, and on the third day the evil was aggravated. The army would have been reduced to extreme straits if they had not captured a barbarian, who conducted them to the river Helibakias, which was not far off. The soldiers reached the bank in the morning and stooping down drank the welcome element. The opposite bank was covered with an impenetrable wood, and suddenly, as the soldiers were sprawling on the river margin, a cloud of darts sped from its fallacious recesses and dealt death among the helpless drinkers. Retreating from the immediate danger, the Romans manufactured rafts and crossed the river to detect the enemy, but in the battle which took place on the other side they were defeated.

In consequence of this defeat Peter was deposed and Priscus appointed commander in his stead.

Of the circumstances which led to the attack of the Avars on Thessalonica in this year we are left in ignorance. For the fact itself our only authority is a life of St. Demetrius, the patron saint of Thessalonica, who on this occasion is said to have protected his city with a strong arm.¹ As this work is, like most lives of saints, written rather for edification than as a record of historical fact, we are not justified in using it further than to establish that the Avars besieged the city and were not successful, and that the ordinary evils of a siege were aggravated by the fact that the inhabitants had recently been afflicted by a plague.

¹ *Acta Sanctorum*, Oct. iv. p. 13.

In the period of history with which we are dealing we are not often brought into contact with the rich and flourishing city of Thessalonica, the residence of the praetorian prefect of Illyricum. It is not that Thessalonica has been always exempt from sieges and disasters, but it so happens that during the period from the death of Theodosius to the end of the eighth century it enjoyed a remarkably untroubled existence. Just before the beginning of this period its streets were the scenes of the great massacre for which Ambrose constrained Theodosius the Great to do penance at Milan,—an event of which a memorial remained till recently in Salonica, a white marble portico supported by caryatids, called by the Jews of the place “*Las incantadas*,” the enchanted women. And a century after the close of this period, in the year 904, the city endured a celebrated siege by the Saracens; while in later times it was destined to suffer sorely from the hostilities of Normans (1185) and of Turks (1430), under whose rule it passed. In the seventh and eighth centuries the surrounding districts were frequently harried by the Slaves who had settled in Macedonia, but with the exception of the siege in 597 and three successive sieges in the seventh century (675-680 A.D.), the city of Demetrius was exempted from the evils of warfare. Its prosperity is indicated by the fact that it was always a headquarters for Jews, and at the present day Jews are said to form two-thirds of the population.¹

(5) 598 A.D.—The two chief events of this year were the relief of Singidunum, which was once more besieged by the Avars, and their invasion of Dalmatia.

Priscus collected his army in the region of Astica in Thrace, and discovered that the soldiers had become demoralised under the ungenial command of Peter; but his friends dissuaded him from reporting the matter to the Emperor. Having crossed the Danube, he proceeded to a town known as Upper Novae, and was met by ambassadors from the chagan, to whom he explained his presence in those regions by the circumstance that they were good for hunting. Ten days later news arrived that the Avars were besieging Singidunum, with the intention

¹ See Mr. Tozer's book on the *Highlands of Turkey*, vol. i. p. 146. It is worth noticing that the fortifications round Salonica are dated in a brick

inscription as belonging to the pontificate of Hormisdas (514 A.D.), a fact which Mr. Mahaffy has recently communicated to me.

of transporting the inhabitants beyond the Ister, and Priscus hastened to its relief. Encamping provisionally in the river-island of Singa, from which the adjacent town derives its name, the general sailed in a fast dromon to Constantiola, where he had an unsatisfactory interview with the chagan.¹ Returning to Singa, Priscus ordered his forces to advance against the besiegers of Singidunum, who speedily retired. The walls of the city, which were unfit to stand a serious siege, were strengthened.

About ten days after this the chagan proceeded to invade the country of Dalmatia. He reduced the town of Bonkeis, and captured no less than forty forts. Priscus despatched a captain named Gudwin, whose German nationality is indicated by his name, with two thousand infantry, to follow the Avaric army. Gudwin chose bypaths and unknown difficult routes, that he might avoid inconvenient collisions with the vast numbers of the invaders. A company of thirty men, whom he sent forward to observe the movements of the enemy, were fortunate enough, as they lay hidden in ambush at night, to capture three drunken barbarians, from whom they learned something of the dispositions of the hostile army, and especially the fact that two thousand men had been placed in charge of the booty. Gudwin, delighted at obtaining this information, concealed his men in a ravine, and as the day dawned suddenly fell upon the guardians of the spoils from the rear. The Avars were cut to pieces, and Gudwin returned triumphantly with the recovered booty to Priscus.

We are told that after these events the chagan desponded,² and that for more than eighteen months, from about the early summer 598 to the late autumn of 599, no hostilities were carried on in the Illyrian and Thracian lands.

(6) 599 A.D.—The chagan invaded Lower (or Thracian) Moesia and Scythia, and Priscus, learning that he intended to besiege the maritime town of Tomi, hastened to occupy it. The siege began at the end of autumn and lasted throughout the winter.

(7) 600 A.D.—In spring the Roman garrison began to

¹ The historian, Theophylactus, delights to couch the speeches both of the barbarian and the Roman in impossibly grandiloquent language. Priscus

speaks of τὴν ἡμέραν . . . ῥοδοειδῆ τε καὶ κροκινίζουσαν.

² ἀθυμία πολλῇ κατεβέβλητο (vii. 12).

feel the hardships of famine. When Easter approached, Priscus was surprised at receiving a kind message from the chagan, who offered to grant a truce of five days and to supply them with provisions.¹ This unexampled humanity on the part of an Avar was long remembered as a curiosity. On the fourth day of the truce a messenger from the chagan requested Priscus to send his master some Indian spices and perfumes. Priscus willingly sent him pepper, which was still as great a delicacy to the barbarians as it had been in the days of Alaric and Attila, Indian leaf, cassia, and spikenard; "and the barbarian, when he received the Roman gifts, perfumed himself, and was highly delighted." The cessation of hostilities was protracted until the Easter festivities were over, and then the chagan raised the siege.

Meanwhile, as Priscus was shut up in the chief town of Scythia, the Emperor had commissioned Comentiolus to take the field in Moesia. The chagan advanced against him and approached the city Iatrus, on the river of the same name, where the general had taken up his quarters. In the depth of night Comentiolus sent a message to his adversary, challenging him to battle on the following day, and at the same time commanded his own army to assemble in fighting array early in the morning. But the soldiers did not comprehend that this order signified a real battle, and, under the false impression that their commander's purpose was merely to hold a review, they appeared in disorder and defectively equipped. Their surprise and indignation were great when, as the rising sun illumined the scene, they beheld the army of the Avars drawn up in martial order. The enemy, however, did not advance, and they had time to curse their general and form in orderly array. But Comentiolus created further confusion by a series of apparently unnecessary permutations; changing one corps from the left wing to the right, and removing some other battalion from the right wing to the left. The right wing fled, and there was a general flight, but the Avars did not pursue. During the following night Comentiolus made provision for his own escape, and next morning left the camp on the pretext of hunting. At noon the army discovered tha

¹ 10th April. Theophylactus, vii. 13, *Geschichte*, p. 91) ". . . schliesst 1: πενθημέρους σπονδὰς συστησάμενοι, Priscus . . . einen 50 tägigen Waffen- which Hopf mistranslates (*Griechische* stillstand."

their general had deserted them, and hastened to follow him. But they were pursued by the Avars, who occupied a mountain pass or *cleisura*, — perhaps the Šipka pass, — and the Romans, now leaderless, were not able to force a passage until many were slain. When Comentiolus appeared before the walls of Drizipera he was driven away with stones and taunts, and was obliged to pass on to Byzantium. The fugitive troops, with the barbarians close at their heels, arrived soon afterwards at Drizipera, and the Avars sacked the city.

But the triumph of the chagan was soon turned into mourning. A plague broke out in his army, the plague of the *bubo*, and seven of his sons who had accompanied the expedition died on the same day. Meanwhile the citizens of Byzantium were so much alarmed at the menacing proximity of the Avar army, before which Comentiolus had fled, that they entertained serious thoughts of migrating in a body to Chalcedon. Maurice first manned the Long Wall with infantry and with companies formed of members of the blue and green factions, and then, by the advice of the senate, sent an ambassador to the chagan. When Harmaton arrived at Drizipera he found the great barbarian in the throes of parental grief, and was obliged to wait ten days ere he could obtain an audience in the tent of mourning. Soothing words with difficulty induced the Avar to accept the gifts of an enemy, but on the following day he consented to make peace, as his family affliction had rendered him indisposed for further operations. He bitterly accused Maurice of being the peacebreaker, and the Roman historian admits the charge.

The terms of the peace were these: the Ister was acknowledged by both parties as the frontier between their dominions, but the Romans had the privilege of crossing it for the purpose of operating against the Slaves¹; twenty thousand aurei were to be paid by the Romans to the Avars.

It was on this occasion that Maurice refused to ransom twelve thousand captives from the chagan, who consequently executed them all. The author of the panegyrical history of Maurice makes no reference to the matter, and his silence is remarkable.² He would certainly have mentioned it if he

¹ The Slaves were not inactive in the year 600; we learn from a letter of Pope Gregory (x. 36) that they plun-

dered Istria, Dalmatia, and even Italy.

² Our authority is Theophanes *ad ann.* See above, p. 86.

could have made any apology for this unpopular act of Maurice.

The Emperor had no intention of preserving the peace, and unblushingly commanded his generals, Priscus and Comentiolus, to violate it. Comentiolus had been reappointed commander, notwithstanding the complaints of the soldiers concerning his recent behaviour. The generals joined their forces at Singidunum, whither Priscus seems to have proceeded after the siege of Tomi, and advanced together down the river to Viminacium (Kastolatz). The chagan meanwhile, learning that the Romans had determined to violate the peace, crossed the Ister at Viminacium and invaded Upper Moesia, while he entrusted a large force to four of his sons, who were directed to guard the river and prevent the Romans from crossing over to the left bank. In spite of the barbarians, however, the Roman army crossed on rafts and pitched a camp on the left side, while the two commanders sojourned in the town of Viminacium, which stood on an island in the river. Here Comentiolus is said to have acted the part of a *poltroon*, according to a now exploded derivation of the word (*pollice truncus*). He employed a surgeon's lancet to mutilate his hand, and thereby incapacitated himself for action. His poltroonery was probably conducive to the success of Roman arms, for Priscus, untrammelled by an incompetent colleague, was able to win a series of signal triumphs.

Unwilling at first to leave the city without Comentiolus, Priscus was soon forced to appear in the camp, as the Avars were harassing it in the absence of the generals. A battle was fought which cost the Romans only three hundred men, while the ground was strewn with the corpses of four thousand Avars. This engagement was followed by two other great battles, in which the strategy of Priscus and the tactics of the Roman army were brilliantly successful. In the first, nine thousand of the enemy fell, while the second was fatal to fifteen thousand, of whom the greater part, and among them the four sons of the chagan, perished in the waters of a lake, into which they were driven by the Roman swords and spears.

Such were the three battles of Viminacium, fought on the left bank of the Danube. But Priscus was destined to win yet greater victories and to vanquish the chagan himself, who,

unable to recross the river at Viminacium, had returned to his country by the region of the Theiss (Tissos). Thither Priscus proceeded, and, a month after his latest victory at Viminacium, he defeated the forces of the barbarians on the banks of the Theiss. He then sent four thousand men to the right bank of that river to reconnoitre the movements of the enemy. This was the territory in which the kingdom of the Gepids had once flourished, and certain regions of it were still inhabited by people of that nation, living in a state of vassalage under the Avars. The reconnoitring party came upon three of their towns, and found the inhabitants engaged in celebrating a feast. Before the dawn of day, when the barbarians were overcome by their debauch, the Romans fell upon and slew thirty thousand; it seems, however, doubtful whether all these were Gepids.¹ A few days later the energy of the chagan had assembled another army, and another battle was fought on the banks of the Theiss. Three thousand Avars, a large number of Slaves, and other barbarians were taken alive; an immense number were slain by the sword; many were drowned in the river. The captives were sent to Tomi, but Maurice was weak enough to restore them to the chagan without a ransom.

When winter approached, Comentiolus proceeded to Novae, and thence, having with considerable difficulty procured a guide, followed the road, or rather the path, of Trajan to Philippopolis.

(8) 601 A.D.—Comentiolus, who had wintered at Philippopolis and proceeded to Byzantium in spring, was again appointed commander, but the summer was marked by no hostilities. In August, Peter the Emperor's brother was created "General of Europe." Having remained for some time at Palastolon on the Danube, he proceeded to Dardania, for he heard that an army of Avars, under a captain named Apsich,

¹ Hopf has reproduced these events in a strangely confused manner for so careful a writer; he seems to have been unable to follow with ease the Greek of Theophylactus. He utterly neglects the chronology, placing the defeat and flight of Comentiolus after the success of Priscus, but that is of small consequence when we compare it with his account of the operations on the Theiss. "Das kaiserliche Heer, aufgehetzt von

dem ehrgeizigen Phokas, bedrohte den Kaiser mit Rebellion. Dies war insoweit günstig für die Avaren, als die Söhne des Khagans mit 18,000 Mann 601 einen Streifzug nach der Theiss unternahmen und gegen 30,000 'Gepiden' niedermachten. Allein Priscus vernichtete sie und besiegte selbst den zu Hilfe eilenden Khagan." Even Carl Hopf is not infallible in using his authorities.

was encamped at a place in that province called the Cataracts. After an ineffectual interview between the Avar commander and the Roman general, the former retreated to Constantiola and the latter withdrew to Thrace for the winter.

(9) 602 A.D.—No martial operations took place during spring, but in summer Gudwin, the officer second in command to Peter, invaded the land of the Slaves beyond the Ister and inflicted terrible slaughter upon them. One Slavonic tribe, the Antae (or Wends), were allies of the Romans, and the chagan accordingly sent Apsich against them by way of a reply to the invasion of Gudwin. We are not informed whether Apsich was successful, but it is recorded that about the same time a large number of Avars revolted from their lord and sought the protection of Maurice.

The last scene in the reign of Maurice has been related in a previous chapter; and at this point our historian, Theophylactus, concludes his work. As no other writer continued where he left off, we hear no more of the Avars and Slaves for sixteen years. Of their doings during the reign of Phocas and the first eight years of the reign of Heraclius our scanty authorities are silent, with the exception of the single notice that in the second year of Phocas the tribute to the Avars was raised. We can, however, entertain no doubt that the Balkan provinces were subjected to sad ravages during the disorganisation which prevailed in the reign of Phocas and the consequent paralysis from which the Empire suffered in the first years of Heraclius. The hostilities of Asiatic enemies were generally wont to have an effect on events in the vicinity of the Danube, and the barbarians can hardly have been disposed to miss such an unrivalled opportunity as was offered to them when Asia Minor was overrun by the Persians.

NOTE ON SLAVONIC SETTLEMENTS IN GREECE

THE groundlessness of Fallmerayer's famous theory that "not a drop of genuine and unmixed Hellenic blood flows in the veins of the christian population of modern Greece" has been shown by Hopf in his *Griechische Geschichte*. One of the passages on which Fallmerayer throws especial weight is Evagrius, vi. 10. It will be advisable to quote it in full:—

οἱ Ἀβαρες δις μέχρι τοῦ καλουμένου μακροῦ τείχους διελάσαντες Σιγγιδόνα Ἀγχιάλόν τε καὶ τὴν Ἑλλάδα πᾶσαν καὶ ἑτέρας πόλεις τε καὶ φρούρια ἐξεπολιόρκησαν καὶ ἡνδραποδίσαντο ἀπόλλυντες ἅπαντα καὶ πυρπολοῦντες, τῶν πολλῶν στρατευμάτων κατὰ τὴν ἑψάν ἐνδιατριβόντων.

Now, in the first place, the Avars, not the Slaves, are the invaders mentioned by Evagrius, and therefore the passage does not support Fallmerayer's Slavonic theory. The Avaric invasions of 583 and 587 seem to be referred to. In the second place, the verbs ἀπόλλυντες and πυρπολοῦντες cannot fairly be taken in the sense (which Fallmerayer assigns to them) of extermination. Similar expressions were used long before of Visigothic and Hunnic devastations.

Another comment of Hopf is not so convincing. By Hellas, Fallmerayer naturally understood Thessaly and Greece north of the Isthmus. Hopf says (p. 91): "Nur Unkenntniss der Geographie konnte den Syrer Evagrius veranlassen nächst den bekannten Städten Singidon und Anchialos noch 'von ganz Hellas und andern Städten und Burgen zu reden'; entweder dachte er sich unter Hellas eine Stadt oder Burg, was am wahrscheinlichsten, oder er übertrug den antiken Namen des eigentlichen Griechenlands auch auf die thrakisch-makedonischen Provinzen des Römerreichs." Hellas was a division of ecclesiastical geography, and it is almost impossible to believe that a man like Evagrius, Syrian though he was, did not know what it meant. ἑτέρας either refers loosely back to Singidunum and Anchialus, or is used, like ἄλλος in classical Greek, in the sense "besides." It is quite possible that in one of these

years the Avaric ravages extended south of Mount Olympus; the alternative being that Evagrius recorded an exaggerated rumour.

The passage in John of Ephesus, quoted above, p. 118, is not so easily disposed of, and Hopf, though he shows that it may not necessarily imply Slavonic settlements in *Greece* between 577 and 584, hardly succeeds in proving that such settlements were not made. The most natural interpretation of the passage in John is that the Slaves settled in Hellas as well as in the northern provinces; and as there is no proof to the contrary, we are bound to accept it? Hopf says (p. 104): "Dass die Slawinen, die 577 auch in Hellas plündern, mit denselben Slawen identisch sind, die unter Ardagast, 584-597 die Reichslande verheeren, kann keinem Zweifel unterliegen; wo sie sich sesshaft gemacht hatten, geht aus dem gesagten hinlänglich hervor, nämlich in den Nordprovinzen, zumeist an der Donau." This is a very weak argument. Probably the Slaves who plundered Greece in 577 belonged to the same tribes as those led by Ardagast (though this assumption is not certain); but why should not some of them have settled in Greece? Unless Hopf means by *identisch* individually the same, his argument falls to the ground; and identity in that sense is certainly a gratuitous assumption.

If there is no evidence to support, there is none to contradict Phrantzes' statement that Monembasia was founded in the reign of Maurice, and this may have some slight weight (*see above*, p. 120) in corroborating the statement of John of Ephesus, according to its simplest interpretation. But we may admit Slavonic settlements in Greece before 600 and yet be very far from accepting Fallmerayer's theory. It may be considered certain that these settlements were only in the open country and not in the cities.

12. 1. 21.

CHAPTER VII

THE SLAVONIC SETTLEMENTS IN ILLYRICUM AND THRACE

IN the first half of the seventh century important Slavonic migrations took place which affected the future of the Haemus peninsula. The details and the dates of these movements are obscure, but the general outline is sufficiently clear.¹

In the year 610 we hear of Bavarians in conflict with Slaves (Slovenes) on the upper Drave,² and we find the latter taking up a permanent abode in the district of Carniola or Krain. At the same time, farther south, the settlements of the Slovenes in Illyricum, Macedonia, and Moesia were increasing, so that there was a considerable Slovene population extending from the frontiers of Bavaria almost to the Aegean. But this homogeneous population was not destined to become welded together and form one nationality; for a few years later—at what moment cannot exactly be determined, but certainly during the reign of Heraclius—two other peoples, Slavonic but not Slovenic,³ known as the Croates and the Serbs, pressed into the lands of Upper Moesia, Lower Pannonia, and Dalmatia, which they permanently occupied, thereby cutting off for ever the Slovenes of Carniola and Carinthia from the Slovenes of Macedonia and Lower Moesia. The lot of the north-western Slovenes was to be linked with that of the Franks and the Western Empire; while their south-eastern

¹ My chief guide has been Dümmler's excellent article on the history of Dalmatia in the Vienna *Sitzungsberichte* (23d April 1856, p. 353 *sqq.*), to which I may refer the reader who is curious as to the literature of the subject.

² Paul, *Hist. Lang.* iv. 39.

³ I use the adjective Slovenic of those Slaves who were called Σκλαβηνοί or Σθλαβηνοί by Greek writers. Their descendants in Carniola, Carinthia, etc., speak a language closely related to the Serbo-Croatian.

brethren were to be closely connected with the Eastern Empire.

Dümmler supposes that the Croates and Serbs¹ were tribes under Avaric suzerainty, and that with the consent of their lords they crossed the Danube to take possession of Dalmatia and Upper Moesia, which the Slovenes had laid waste. The fact that Pope John IV, a Dalmatian by birth, sent an abbot to Istria and Dalmatia, between 640 and 642 A.D., to collect christian relics and ransom christian prisoners from the heathen, proves that the newcomers occupied those provinces in the reign of Heraclius. In later years, when the power of the Avars had passed away and the Serbs and Croatians had been converted to Christianity and entered into connection with Byzantium, the idea arose that they had been originally invited to settle in their homes by the Emperor Heraclius, and this idea, accepted and echoed by the Emperor Constantine Porphyrogennetos, has been generally received.

I have been speaking of the Croatians as an unequivocally Slavonic people, and this is the generally received doctrine. I believe, however, that it is not a strictly correct view. Before the tenth century the legend had arisen that the Croatians came to their new abodes from the land of White Croatia under the leadership of five brothers, Klukas, Lobel, Cosentzes, Muchlô, Chrobátos, and two sisters, Buga and Tuga.² This Croatian legend has a strong family resemblance to the Bulgarian legend of Krobat (or Kubrat) and his five sons, which will be related in another chapter³; and I think we can hardly hesitate to suppose that Krobat and Chrobátos are the same prehistorical hero of the Hunnic nation to which the various closely related tribes of the Bulgarians, Cotrigurs, and Onogundurs belonged. If this be a true view, the name *Croatia* is not Slavonic, and, as a matter of fact, no probable Slavonic

¹ Constantine Porphyrogennetos says that the original home of these peoples was in White Serbia (beyond Hungary), but he is confusing the Serbs and Sorbs. Dümmler believes that there may be some foundation for a Great or White Croatia (Βελοχρωβάτοι) to the north-east of Bohemia, as the Croatian name appears in the neighbourhood of Krakau. Constantine thought Σέρβλοι was a Latin word equivalent to *servi* (*de*

Adm. Imp. iii. 152), whence also the name σέρβουλα for poor shoes such as Slaves wear, and τζερβουλιανοί for the cobblers who make them; the Serbs, he says, were so called because they were the δοῦλοι of the Roman Emperor. Σπόροι in Procopius, *B. G.* iii. 14, has been identified by Šafarik with the Serbs.

² Const. Porph. iii. p. 143 (ed. Bonn).

³ Below, cap. xi.

explanation of it has ever been suggested. On the other hand, the Hunnic or Bulgaric name leads us to the interesting conclusion that the establishment of the Croatian Slaves as an independent state in Dalmatia was due to the same conditions that established the kingdom of the Bulgarian Slaves in Moesia. The Slaves of Croatia were clearly conquered by a Bulgarian people, just as the Slaves of Moesia were conquered by a Bulgarian people. But when and where the former conquest took place cannot be determined. It does not seem probable that Hunnic Croats suddenly entered Dalmatia in the seventh century and conquered the Slaves who had been forming settlements there for the past hundred years. Some definite record of such an event would have been preserved, and there would have been most certainly a Croatian kingdom ruled by sovereigns of Hunnic names, instead of a number of practically independent župans. We must therefore suppose that Dalmatia was invaded in the reign of Heraclius, not by Croatian Huns, but by Croatian Slaves, that is to say, Slaves who had been conquered many years before in some country north of the Danube by Bulgarians, and had already absorbed the individuality of their conquerors. Turanian Chrobat or Krobat was associated in the legend with Slavonic names, *Buga* and *Tuga*, Weal and Woe. I may add that this theory is supported by the non-Slavonic name of the Croatian governor, Boanos (Βοάνος), which strongly reminds us of the Avar Baian, and of Baian or Batbaian, who in Bulgarian legend was one of the sons of Krobat.

The invasion of Croats and Serbs caused a general flight coastwards among the Roman inhabitants of Dalmatia, and new towns were founded on islands and promontories, just as Venice is said to have been founded by fugitives from the Huns and as Monembasia was probably founded in the Peloponnesus by fugitives from the Slaves. The inhabitants of the ancient Tragurium (Traù)¹ withdrew to the opposite island of Bua; Rausium,² or Ragusa, was founded by the citizens who fled

¹ Tragurium is mentioned by Polybius (xxii. 18). It is called Τερπυργούριον by Const. Porph.

² It is hard to decide whether there is anything in the statement of Constantine Porph. (*de Adm. Imp.* iii. 136)

that the original name of the 'Ραουσαία was Λαυσαία, from a "Romaic" word λαῦ = cliff (apparently connected with λᾱς). The change from λ to ρ is highly improbable, as there is no other liquid in the word to cause assimilation or

from the old Greek colony of Epidaurus; and the town of Cattaro (Dekatera) had a similar origin. Salona, the home of Diocletian in his last years, did not escape destruction, and some of its inhabitants founded the town of Spalato,¹ or Spalatro, around the palace of Diocletian, from which it derived its name. Is it fanciful to suppose that, when the people of Salona fled from their city at the approach of the invaders, they made for the Emperor's palace, and that some cried in Greek, 's *palation* (ἡ παλάτιον—that is, "to the palace!"), and that hence the name *Spalation*, which became Spalato, was given to the new town? Further north, in the district of Liburnia, the city of Jadera² (Zara) defied the Slave, and four islands opposite the mainland—Veglia, Arbe, Cherso, and Lussin, of which the two latter together are called by one name, Opsara—also remained under the supremacy of the Empire. The inhabitants of these cities and islands were called *Romanoi* by the Greeks, and retained the Latin language. A Byzantine stratêgos, in whose hands military and civil powers were combined, resided at Zara, and it may be conjectured that he was responsible to the exarch of Ravenna. The payment of a certain tribute and the contribution of ships and sailors for service in the Adriatic were practically the only link of connection that bound these dependencies with the Empire.

The kingdom of the Croats was probably much larger from the seventh to the ninth century than in later times; for at first it seems to have included Bosnia, which was afterwards lost to the Serbs.³ Croatia was divided into four župes, governed by independent princes called župans. There was one great

dissimilation (as e.g. in *lusciniola*, rosignol). *Argosy* is generally derived from the ship Argo; but it is possible that Ragusan galleys may have been the original argosies, and that the metathesis of the first two letters may have been due to reminiscences of the mythical vessel.

¹ Ἀσπάλαν, interpreted by Constantine Porph. as παλάτιον μικρόν, a little palace; a derivation which seems in the highest degree doubtful. ἀσπάλανος is a prickly shrub with a fragrant oil, and this Greek name seems to have been a Volksetymologie.

² Const. Porph. says that Diadora was called in "Romaic" *Jam erat*

(Romaic in this passage means Latin), in the sense that it was founded before Rome (!) It is not easy to see how he got *jam erat* from Jadera.

³ Dümmler deduces this from the statement of Const. Porphyr. that Croatia had declined in the middle of the ninth century, and that its military power had once amounted to 60,000 cavalry and 100,000 infantry—numbers incredible from the size of their land in later times—combined with the notice that at first the Croats spread themselves in Pannonia (evidently Lower Pannonia) and Illyria, i.e. Dalmatia and the land north and east towards the Save and Drina.

župan, but his was merely a titular greatness, which, however, afterwards developed into real monarchical power under the external influence of other monarchical constitutions.¹

South of the Croats, who had occupied northern Dalmatia as far as the river Cettina, were the four races of maritime Serbians. The Narentanes,² who became renowned as pirates, dwelled between the Cettina and the Narenta, and for many generations, living amid inaccessible rocks, resisted the influences of Christianity, whence they were called by their Roman neighbours *Pagans*, a word which a Greek writer of the tenth century supposed to be Slavonic and translated "unbaptized." The district between the river Narenta and the town of Ragusa was occupied by the Zachlums, an important tribe; south of whom dwelled the less considerable Travouni between Ragusa and Cattaro; and the Dukljani³ between Cattaro and Antivari, in the district corresponding to modern Montenegro.

We seldom meet with the Romans of Dalmatia and their Slavonic neighbours in the general current of Roman history during the seventh and eighth centuries. We may conclude that as the power of the Avars decreased, the power of the Slaves increased; and that when Avaric influence had quite passed away, the Slaves entered into peaceful relations with the Emperor of Constantinople before the end of the seventh century, perhaps in the year 678, when all the powers of the West vied in establishing friendly relations with Constantine IV. Soon afterwards they were converted to Christianity.

We may now turn from the south-western Slaves, who were destined to remain free from Turanian influence, to the south-eastern Slaves, who were soon to pass under a Turanian yoke. The statement of Constantine Porphyrogennetos that Heraclius settled the Slaves in Thrace and Macedonia cannot be accepted without reservation. We have seen how during the last thirty years of the sixth century Thrace and Illyricum were receiving a considerable Slavonic population; the invaders took up their abode in the land, and lived half as peasants half as freebooters. During this time the valiant and experienced Priscus was at

¹ Dümmler notices that the court of the great župan bears clear traces of Frank influence.

Lesina, Curzola, Méleda, were colonised by the Narentanes.

² The islands of south Dalmatia,

³ So called from the town of Dioclea.

the head of a Roman army in those provinces, and could to a certain extent keep the Slaves in check and prevent the land from being deluged with the strangers. But during the reigns of Phocas and Heraclius the political anarchy and the pressing difficulties of the Persian war rendered the government unable to extend its protection to the Illyrian and Thracian provinces; they were left to shift for themselves. The large fortified towns, Thessalonica, Hadrianople, or Marcianopolis, were able to defy the Avar and the Slave, or to purchase exemption from their hostilities; but there were no forces to hinder the occupation of the land. When the great Scythian destroyer marched against the city of Constantine in 626, to capture it in conjunction with the Persian, it must have been through an almost Slavonic land that his way lay. The connection then of Heraclius with these Slavonic settlers, which had been somehow handed down to the imperial antiquarian, probably consisted in arranging a "mode of living" with them. Heraclius doubtless made compacts with the chiefs of their tribes—even as Constantine and Aetius made compacts with Visigoths and Vandals, and Zeno with the Ostrogoths—that they should inhabit certain limited territories. It cannot be doubted that Heraclius, after his Persian victories, directed his attention to the condition of the Haemus countries, which sorely needed succour after a long neglect; but for us their history is buried in obscurity during this period. At the same time the decline of the Avar monarchy, which set in soon after the failure of the chagan at Constantinople, influenced the political situation, and a general revolt of the subject Slaves and Bulgarians, which drove the Avars westward, may have been attended with new migrations to the lands south of the Danube.¹

Regions of Lower Moesia and the lands of Macedonia about Thessalonica seem to have been the two chief Slavonic districts, or, as we may call them, the Sclavinias.² The action of Heraclius doubtless consisted in recognising these settlements as dependencies on the Empire. Before we reach the end of the

¹ Of the fall of the Avar monarchy we hear little. Suidas, *sub voce* "Αβάρης, has this notice, *ὅτι τοὺς Ἀβάρης οἱ Βόλγαροι κατὰ κράτος ἄρδην ἠφάνισαν*. In late legends the Avars are called Ὀμβροι, and a Russian proverb is preserved by

Nestor—"They have vanished, like the Obri, without posterity, without heir" (*ni plemene ni naslědka*).

² *Sclavinia* (Σκλαβινία) is now used of the lands which corresponded to the ancient Pannonia.

seventh century we shall hear of the "seven Slavonic tribes" in Moesia, which were subdued by the Bulgarians, but we know nothing more precise about the Moesian Sclavinia.

Of the Macedonian Sclavinia we know more; the *Life of St. Demetrius* has preserved some details touching the tribes which, settled in the neighbourhood of Thessalonica, harried its territory and threatened its walls. Between Thessalonica and Beroea, in the valleys of the Axios and the Haliacmon, abode the tribes of the Drogubites and Sagudates. South of these, a district on the Gulf of Pagasae (Volo), in Thessaly, was occupied by the Belegezêtes (whose name survives in the modern Velestino), the Berzêtes, and the Bajunêtes. All these tribes combined to besiege Thessalonica in the episcopate of archbishop John II (675-681), and the city of St. Demetrius was hardly saved by the miraculous protection of its patron. Other Slaves were settled on the Strymon, and the Runchines were among the most formidable neighbours of the cities of Macedonia. Most of these barbarous tribes infested the sea as well as the land, and penetrated in their light piratical boats into the waters of the Propontis.¹

We saw reason to suppose that in the reign of Maurice Slaves had begun to settle in the lands south of Mount Olympus. It is almost certain that the Slavonic element in Greece increased during the reign of Heraclius, while the entire attention of the government was occupied by the struggle with Persia, for we can hardly refuse to allow so much credit to the strong statement of the contemporary Isidore of Seville that "the Slaves took Greece from the Romans," *Sclavi Graeciam Romanis tulerunt*.² But while we infer so much from the words of the Spanish bishop, I think we can hardly infer more. It is certain at least that the large towns did not fall a prey to the Slaves. Athens, for example, was still Greek and to some extent still a seat of learning, for the great Theodore of Tarsus, to whom our own England owes so much, was educated there. Nor had the country yet become Slavised, as it is said to have become in the following century.

¹ *Acta Sanctorum*, Oct. iv. pp. 162-174. See Hopf, *Griechische Geschichte*, p. 94, and below, p. 337.

² *Chron.* 120.

CHAPTER XI

FOUNDATION OF THE BULGARIAN KINGDOM

By the middle of the seventh century the Balkan lands were, as we have seen, covered with Slavonic settlements, so that in Moesia, Illyricum, Macedonia the Slaves constituted the bulk of the population. The towns on the sea-coast were still Greek, and the remains of the old Albanese and Thracian nations lingered still among the mountains; but it was evident that destiny had marked out the peninsula north of Mount Olympus for a Slavonic country.

The Slaves, however, were themselves incapable of union; they had no political instinct in that direction; and if a principle of unity had not been induced from without, they might have never become dominant, they might have even been gradually crushed by the Emperors of Constantinople.

The people who supplied the unity, which the Slovenes were by themselves incapable of realising, were the Bulgarians, a non-Aryan race allied with the Khazars, Magyars, etc., and belonging to what is called the Ugro-Finnic branch. We have already met them as early as the end of the fifth century fighting with Theodoric, and defeated by him; we have then seen them invading the Roman Empire in the reigns of Anastasius and Justinian, and afterwards, at the end of the sixth century, reduced to a condition of semi-dependence on the Avar monarchy. These Bulgarians, who dwelled on the Euxine coast north of the Danube in Budžak and Bessarabia, had separated from the great Bulgarian nation, whose home

was in the lands between the Don, the Volga, and the Kuban, east of the Sea of Azov.¹

The Greek historians Theophanes and Nicephorus,² living at the end of the eighth century, record a story about the Bulgarians, which they must have drawn from a common source, as not only their facts but their verbal expressions coincide. This story is legendary, but it has a historical foundation. Kokrat, or Kourat, was king of the kindred nations of the Bulgarians and Kotragoi in the reign of Heraclius. He died in the reign of Constans, leaving five sons, whom he exhorted to cling together and not break up the Bulgarian power. As might have been predicted, they did not follow his admonition. The first son, Baian or Batbaian (a name that reminds us of the chagan of the Avars in the reign of Maurice), remained in the territory of his father; the second, whose name was Kotragos, established himself on the right bank of the Don; the third, Asperuch, crossed the Dniepr and Dniestr, and settled near the north bank of the Danube; the fourth migrated to Pannonia, and was subject unto the Avars; the fifth travelled still farther west, and settled in the "pentapolis of Ravenna."

This notice crowds into the reign of Constans the Second events that took place nearly two centuries before. The migration of the third brother, Asperuch (or Isperich, as he is called in the Slavonic record of Bulgarian monarchs³), represents a migration that took place before the year 480 A.D. We may further conjecture that the migrations of the fourth

¹ περὶ τὴν Μαῖωτιν Λίμνην κατὰ τὸν Κώφιν ποταμὸν (Nicephorus, ed. de Boor, p. 33).

² M. Jiriček, in his excellent chapter on "die Einwanderung der Bulgaren," is not quite accurate in his statement touching the Greek account of the *Vorgeschichte* of this people. In the first place, he speaks as if it were only to be found in the history of Nicephorus, and does not once mention Theophanes; and yet Theophanes is fuller in his details than Nicephorus, although both drew from the same source. But the curious point is that M. Jiriček, while professing to quote from Nicephorus, really quotes Theophanes — e.g. the name Batbaian is the form in Theophanes, Baianos the form in Nice-

phorus, and Jiriček gives the former. In the second place, he places Kokrat's death and the division of the kingdom in the reign of Constantine IV; but Nicephorus (like Theophanes) places it in the reign of "the Constantine who died in the West" (i.e. Constans II). Apparently M. Jiriček has quoted his authorities here at second hand.

³ This obscure record (see Jiriček, p. 127) contains several inexplicable Bulgarian words, which Hilferding has tried to interpret by the help of Hungarian. According to it, Kurt reigned sixty years. The name of the royal Bulgarian family was *Dulo*. The list begins from the earliest times and goes down to 765 A.D. The first Bulgarian king, Avitochol, reigned 300 years.

and fifth brothers do not represent separations from the mother nation on the bank of the Kuban, but rather offshoots from the daughter nation between the Danube and Dniestr. Both these later settlements of the Bulgarians in Pannonia and in Italy must have taken place in the seventh century; and we must evidently connect the fifth with the notice of Paul, the historian of the Lombards, that King Grimuald settled some Bulgarians, who entered Italy peacefully under the leadership of one Alzeco, in the neighbourhood of Beneventum.¹

The Bulgarian king² who revolted against the Avars and allied himself with Heraclius, Kokrat or Kroat, is called Kurt in the Slavonic list of Bulgarian monarchs to which we have already referred. Nicephorus records that Kubrat, the nephew of Organ and chief of the Onogundurs, revolted against the chagan of the Avars and made a treaty with Heraclius, who conferred on him the title of Patrician; moreover, Kubrat expelled the Avars from his own land. This event was decisive for the history of the Bulgarians, just as the battle of Netad was decisive for the history of the Ostrogoths.

In the reign of Constantine IV the independent Bulgarians began to distress the neighbouring Roman territory by their incursions. The Emperor determined to take vigorous measures immediately, and, instead of merely strengthening the frontier defences, to attack the enemy in their own country and teach them a salutary lesson. He prepared a naval armament as well as a land army, and transported the Asiatic troops to Europe. The territory of the Bulgarians was called Oglos or Onglos (an angle or corner), and corresponds to the district marked Budžak on modern maps. Here they possessed strong

¹ Paul. Diac. v. 29. The places conceded to the Bulgarians were Sepinum (Sipicciano), Isernia (Sergna), Bovianum, and other *civitates*. Alzeco's title was changed from *dux* to *gastaldius*. Those who were subjects of the Avars afterwards migrated to the territory of the Franks, who treacherously murdered them all (Fredegarius, cap. 72).

² King of the Onogundurs (Nicephorus, p. 24). Nicephorus does not identify the Onogundurs with the Bulgarians, nor Onogunduric Kubrat, of the reign of Heraclius, with Bulgarian Kubrat, of the reign of Constans (as he sup-

poses); but Theophanes, 6171 A.M., makes the former identification, τῶν Οὐννογοννδούρων Βουλγάρων καὶ Κοτράγων. The first Kubrat or Kurt is historical, and really reigned on the Danube, but the second Kubrat is legendary, or at least a personage of remoter antiquity. The actual reign of a famous Kubrat in the seventh century led to the old legends being attached to his name, and it was supposed that it was he who led the Bulgarians from the Caucasus to the Danube. *Organ* (the father of Kubrat) is a Turkish name.

and inaccessible fortresses, secured by precipitous rocks which rose behind and perfidious morasses which stretched in front, so that it was a difficult country for an invader. When they saw the great expeditions by land and sea that had come against them, the Bulgarians, greatly terrified, retreated into their fastnesses, and for four days endured a siege. But unluckily the Emperor, who had accompanied the naval armament in person, fell sick of a pain in his foot, and, commanding his forces to continue the siege, departed with a few ships to Mesembria. Some regiments of cavalry misconstrued the departure of the sovereign as flight, and, seized with a groundless panic, fled themselves. The panic was communicated to the rest of the army, the flight became general, and the Bulgarians, issuing from their retreats, pursued and completely routed the Romans. All whom they captured they put to death. Still pursuing, they crossed the Danube and advanced to Varna, near Odessus. Struck by the natural features of Moesia, which seemed to lend it a peculiar security,—the Haemus on the south, the Danube on the north, the Euxine on the east,—they determined to change their habitation and establish themselves south of the Danube.

Accordingly, the Bulgarians reduced to subjection the seven Slavonic tribes that dwelled in Moesia, experiencing probably little resistance, and disposed them along the frontiers of the new Bulgarian kingdom, to defend it on the west against the Avars and on the south against the Romans.¹ The tribe of the Severs² (*Σεβέρεις*) was placed to guard the pass of Beregaba in the eastern Balkans. The Roman towns and forts were gradually reduced, and Constantine, after the failure of his great expedition, was constrained to make a treaty with the new kingdom that was being founded within Roman territory, and to agree to the payment of a certain sum of money every year to the Bulgarian king, Isperich. The motive of Constantine in paying this tribute seems to have been to save Thrace from immediate invasion, so that he might have time to take measures for its permanent security against “the new and abominable” neighbours.

¹ There is a story, resting on Arabian authority, that the entire Bulgarian kingdom was surrounded by a thorn

hedge provided with wooden windows (Jiriček, p. 133).

² Roesler regards them as Huns.

The chief towns of the new kingdom founded by Isperich were Prêslav (Peristhlaba),¹ on the Kamčija (about a degree due west of Varna), and Drster (Durostorum, the modern Silistria), on the Danube; and in these regions the kingdom continued for more than two centuries with little change in its boundaries, nearly corresponding to the modern principality of Bulgaria. It was not till the tenth century that Bulgarian supremacy extended to the south-west, and included the Slaves of Macedonia and Dacia. In the meantime the conquered Slaves were by a gradual process conquering their Tartaric conquerors.² The Bulgarian customs had little influence on the Slavonic character; and the Bulgarian language had less influence on the Slavonic language. On the contrary, the Bulgarians were Slavised, and ultimately absorbed among the Slaves, so that the Bulgarian people of the present day is purely Slavonic, with nothing non-Aryan about it except its name and a slight infusion of Tartar blood.

In these events we see two features of Slavonic history prominently marked. We observe on the one hand the inability of the wayward Slavonic tribes to form a political unity, without an alien power to give the initiative by subjecting them to a monarchy. On the other hand we see the assimilative absorbing power of the Slavonic race—herein somewhat resembling the Hellenic—which was able in a short time to obliterate the identity of the conquerors, while it profited by the principles of unity and monarchy which they had introduced. I call these two phenomena features of Slavonic history, because they recurred some centuries later in the more celebrated case of the Russians, and, if my conjecture touching the Croatian Slaves is right, they had occurred in a less pronounced form before.³ The unity, to which the Slaves of Russia would never have attained of themselves, was superinduced by the Northmen of Scandinavia, who founded a Russian kingdom; but the language, the manners, and the identity of the conquerors were soon absorbed in Slavism.

Thus for the Slaves the way to unity and empire has lain

¹ It is uncertain when Peristhlaba was founded. At first Varna was probably the capital.

² Noble Slaves were admitted by their conquerors to a share in the ad-

ministration. As to the Slavonic cultivators of the soil, Jiriček says they were probably reduced to a sort of partial *Leibeigenschaft*.

³ See above, cap. vii.

through acceptance of a foreign yoke; they have lost their life in order to save it.

The khan of the Bulgarians ruled with a council of six *bolyars* (*βοῦλάδες*, whence the Russian *boyar*), and the constitution rested on an aristocratic basis. The customs of the Bulgarians had an oriental complexion, and differed totally from those of the Slaves. They were polygamists. The women veiled their faces, and the men wore turbans, and both sexes wore loose trousers. The king partook of his meals alone, without the company even of a wife. The Bulgarians cared only for war, and their barbarous manners present no trace of industrial development. In their old homes they did not use coins; cattle were the medium of exchange. They were a superstitious people, and considered magical rites a necessary preliminary to battle.¹

About ten years after the settlement of Isperich and his Bulgarians in Moesia, the young Emperor Justinian dissolved the peace which his father had made by refusing to pay the stipulated tribute (689 A.D.)² He ordered the cavalry regiments stationed in Asia Minor to cross over to Thrace, "desiring to lead captive the Bulgarians and the Sclavinias," that is the Sclavinia which was now included in the Bulgarian kingdom and the Sclavinia to the west of Mount Rhodope, which was nominally part of the Roman Empire, but was constantly rebelling. In the following year (690) Justinian first marched northwards against the Bulgarians, whom he repulsed, and then turned westwards against the Slavonic settlements in the neighbourhood of Thessalonica. He succeeded in collecting a vast number of Slaves, some of whom voluntarily joined him, while others he forcibly constrained; and, having transported them to Asia Minor, settled them in the district of Opsikion. We have already seen how he formed thirty thousand of these captives into a "supernumerary corps" under the command of Nebulus, and how twenty thousand of them deserted to the Saracens.

The Bulgarians enjoyed a slight revenge for their defeat. They waylaid Justinian, "as he was returning," in a mountain pass, and he escaped with difficulty. But it is not clear

¹ See Jiriček and Roesler, *Rom. Stud.* p. 239. The main source is the *Responsa ad cons. Bulgar.* of Pope Nicolas (Harduin, v. p. 353). ² Theoph. 6180 A.M.

whether this took place as he was returning from Thessalonica with his captives or after he had settled them in Opsikion. The Bulgarians, however, seem not to have harassed the Empire again during the reign of Isperich, who died in 700 and was succeeded by Terbel.

I may add a word as to the history of the old Bulgarians who dwelt on the Kuban and Kama. Their kingdom was called Great Bulgaria, and was on friendly terms with the Saracens, who converted it to Mohammedanism in the tenth century. It suffered from the enmity of the Khazars and the Russians, and was finally, in the thirteenth century, exterminated by the Tartars. And thus the only relic of the Bulgarians is their name, which in western Europe¹ has come to be a word of opprobrium, connoting a nameless vice.

I may conclude this chapter by noticing the series of attacks which were made upon Thessalonica by the Macedonian Slaves in the latter part of the seventh century. In 675 or 676 the fierce tribes who dwelled on the coasts of the Thermaic and Pagasaic gulfs blockaded the capital of Illyricum by land and sea. But the ships of the besiegers were scattered by a storm; and, as far as we can determine from the account transmitted by a biographer who writes for edification, a sally of the besiegers put the land army to flight, and Chatzon, the chief of the expedition, was captured, and stoned to death by women. The inhabitants attributed this deliverance to the special intervention of St. Demetrius, whose church still attests the honour in which he was held; just as, nearly a hundred years before, the repulse of the Avars was gratefully set down to his protection.

But the Slaves had not abandoned the idea of obtaining possession of the great capital of Illyricum. In 677 the aid of the holy Demetrius was again needed, when the barbarians returned to the assault, reinforced by Avars and Bulgarians and provided with poliorcetic machines. The blockade lasted for a month, and then the foe retired, the saint having again wrought deliverance for his city. At this time John II was archbishop of Thessalonica, and his activity in providing for the defence of the town is closely connected with the super-

¹ Similarly from the Ugrian (Hungarian) name comes our "ogre."

natural colouring given to the events by the ecclesiastical biographer, in whose pages the praetorian prefect plays a subordinate part. The city suffered from an earthquake soon after this siege, and had the distress of beholding the church of its patron in flames. A greater misfortune befell it in the death of the archbishop. Then we have a glimpse of Perbund (Pervund), "chief" of the Runchines, walking in the streets of the town; but the praetorian prefect suspects him, commits him to irons, and sends him to Constantinople. He attempts to escape from prison and is slain.

In consequence of this dealing with Perbund, his tribe, the Runchines, combine with the Sagudates and march against Thessalonica (678). For two whole years the city is closely blockaded, and endures all the miseries incident to a siege. The Emperor is unable to send more than ten small ships to its relief; and the raising of the siege is finally due to dissensions among the beleaguers. The Belegezêtes desert to the Romans, and the enemy's camp is broken up (680); but the credit of the deliverance falls to the share of the saint. Once more, in the following year, the city is besieged; and once more the besiegers are repulsed by its protector. In the meantime the waters of the northern Aegean are infested by the Slavonic pirates.¹

¹ For these events, see the "Vita Sancti Demetrii," in the *Acta Sanctorum*, Oct. iv. (162-174). The name of the praetorian prefect is mentioned—Charias.

NOTE

THE question touching an early introduction of Islam among the Bulgarians is discussed by C. M. Fraehn in an essay on "Drei Münzen der Wolga-Bulgaren aus dem x. Jahrhundert n. Chr." (*Mém. de l'acad. imp. des sciences de St. Pétersbourg*, vol. i. 6th series, 1832, p. 171 *sqq.*) Some of the customs of the Moesian Bulgarians (above, p. 336) and the name of one of their kings (Omar, below, p. 473) point this way; but the authority of Ibn Foszlan and others establishes that Great Bulgaria was converted to Mohammedanism in the tenth century. Fraehn accordingly assumes an earlier and a later introduction of Islam, and connects the hostilities of the heathen Khazars with the early conversion (p. 189).

12. 1. 21.

CHAPTER VII

BULGARIA

THE Bulgarian monarch Terbel, who had restored Justinian II to the throne, and in return for that service obtained the rank of a Roman Caesar, who had afterwards attacked the Saracens as they besieged Constantinople, and in the following year espoused for a moment the cause of the ex-Emperor Anastasius, died in 720, after a reign of twenty years, during which the Bulgarian kingdom had been on terms of almost unbroken peace with the Roman Empire.¹ Forty-three years passed, during which two princes, both fameless and one nameless, ruled the Bulgarians; then in 753 Kormisoś usurped the royal power, and a period of disturbances set in.

As the Bulgarians were in the habit of making inroads on Thrace, Constantine took measures to secure the frontier by establishing strong fortresses, and planting, as settlers in the northern parts of Thrace, the Syrian and Armenian inhabitants of towns in Asia, which he conquered from the Saracens. At this juncture (755) Kormisoś sent a message to Constantine demanding the payment of tribute, that the Emperor's refusal might be an excuse for invading the Empire. According to one

¹ A treaty, fixing the boundaries and determining commercial relations, was concluded in the brief reign of Theodosius III. We learn this fact incidentally from a notice of Theophanes when he is dealing with Crumn and Nicephorus I, 6305 A.M. τὰς ἐπὶ Θεοδοσίου τοῦ Ἀδραμυτηνοῦ στοιχηθείσας καὶ Γερμανοῦ τοῦ πατριάρχου σπονδὰς πρὸς Κορμέσιον τὸν κατ' ἐκεῖνο καιροῦ κύριον Βουλγαρίας· αἱ τοὺς ὅρους περιεῖχον ἀπὸ

Μηλεωνῶν τῆς Θράκης, ἐσθῆτάς τε καὶ κόκκινα δέρματα ἕως τιμῆς λ' λιτρῶν χρυσίου . . . τοὺς δὲ ἐμπορευομένους εἰς ἑκατέρας χώρας διὰ σιγιλλίων καὶ σφραγίδων συνίστασθαι, τοῖς δὲ σφραγίδας μὴ ἔχουσιν ἀφαιρεῖσθαι τὰ προσόντα αὐτοῖς καὶ εἰσκομίζεσθαι τοῖς δημοσίοις λόγοις. Theophanes errs in the name of the king of Bulgaria, who was Terbel in 716, not Kormesios. Jiriček (p. 140) wrongly places this treaty in 714.

historian, the Bulgarians devastated Thrace up to the Long Wall, but were then attacked and routed by the Emperor¹; according to another, they returned to their country unharmed.²

In 758 Constantine proceeded to Macedonia to reduce the Slaves, whose numbers in those regions had considerably increased of late. In consequence of the ravages of the plague, there had been a very large migration of families from northern Greece and the Peloponnesus to Constantinople; and this evacuation had left room for the Slaves to press southwards, where they were fast gaining ground. The Sclavinias, as the settlements in Macedonia and Thessaly were called, were nominally tributary to the Emperor, but they were ever ready to throw off the yoke, and it was not always easy for the Emperors, occupied by Saracen or Bulgarian wars, to reduce them to submission. Constantine subjugated "the Sclavinias," and made prisoners of the refractory.

In the following year he headed an expedition against Bulgaria,³ but when he arrived at the pass of Berégaba, somewhere between Anchialus and Varna, he was met by the enemy, and experienced a defeat, which was fatal to two important ministers, the general of the Thracesian theme and the master-general of the post (logothete of the course).⁴ Three years later we find that Kormisoš is no longer king, that the Bulgarians have revolted and set up Teletz (Teletzes), a man of a bold, and some said bad, disposition. The domestic discord that prevailed at this time induced an immense number of Slaves, two hundred and eight thousand, to leave Bulgaria. They fled in their boats on the Euxine to the shelter of the Roman Empire, and Constantine settled them near the river Artana in Bithynia.

¹ Nicephorus, p. 66.

² Theophanes, 6247 A.M. Nicephorus and Theophanes are our only original authorities for this chapter. An old half-Slavonic half-Bulgarian list of Bulgarian monarchs (Jiriček, p. 139) gives us a few names.

³ 6251 A.M., 759 A.D. Jiriček (p. 141) would identify Berégaba with either: "Nadir Derbend oder der Saumpfad von Mesembria über Eminé nach Varna." Nicephorus mentions, without date, a very successful expedition of Constantine by land and sea.

He defeated the Bulgarians in a battle at Marcellae (Marcellon?), and ravaged their country. This is not mentioned by Theophanes (or Jiriček), but from the order of the narration in Nicephorus must have taken place about 756 or 757.

⁴ λογοθέτης τοῦ δρόμου. This is the earliest mention of this office, which in the sixth century belonged to the praet. prefects. It is to be presumed that the logothete of the course was created in the seventh century, when the praet. pref. of the East ceased to exist.

Teletz soon attacked Roman towns and plundered Roman territory in the neighbourhood of Mount Haemus, and Constantine prepared an expedition to chastise his insolence. On the 17th of June 762 he left the city, having previously sent by the Euxine a fleet of eight hundred transport vessels,¹ carrying twelve horses each, to meet him at Anchialus. When Teletz heard of these preparations, he collected about two thousand auxiliary troops from the neighbouring Slavonic tribes of Illyricum,² and secured his fortresses. The Emperor encamped in the plain of Anchialus, and on the 30th of June, when Teletz arrived with a large army, a battle was fought, lasting from eleven o'clock in the forenoon until late in the evening. The Bulgarians and Slaves were beaten back and routed by the Roman cavalry. Many were killed and many captured; the latter were carried through the streets of Constantinople on wooden planks,³ adorning the triumph of the Emperor, who then delivered them to the populace to deal with as it willed.

The defeat of Teletz was fatal to his supremacy. The people rebelled, slew him and his ministers, and set up Sabin, the son-in-law of Kormisoſ, in his stead. The new king sent to the Emperor a proposal of peace, but this policy displeased his disorderly subjects, who delighted in war. They met together in a sort of diet, called by the Greek historian *komventon* (*conventus*), and having deposed Sabin, asking him, "Is Bulgaria to be enslaved to the Romans by thee?" they elected Baian (Paganos).⁴ Sabin fled to Constantine, who espoused his cause; and the Emperor found some means to seize the wives and relations of the Bulgarian nobles who had led the opposi-

¹ Theophanes says 2000.

² ἔχων εἰς συμμαχίαν καὶ Σκλαβηνῶν οὐκ ὀλίγα πλῆθη (Nic.) These cannot have been his subjects, and were presumably his western or south-western neighbours. Theoph. say he obtained two thousand troops from neighbouring nations.

³ ξυλοπανδούροις (Theoph.)

⁴ Theophanes calls him Pagános, but his true name, Baian, is known from the old Bulgarian catalogue, already referred to. The name Baian was familiar to the Greek historian; it was a common name of Hunnic sovereigns. We cannot, therefore, suppose that the corruption was due to Theophanes. I suspect that the Slaves (or

Vlachs?) gave this king the name of Pagán, "heathen," as a sort of play on Baian. The Latin word *paganus* had passed into the Slavonic tongues, apparently in Pannonia, and Constantine Porphyrogennetos actually regarded it as a Slavonic word. The Byzantines, hearing the king called Pagan by the Slaves, adopted the name. It has, however, been suggested that Pagan and Sabinus were sprung from the Roman population of the Balkan lands—in fact, that they were Roumans or Vlachs. If so, their reigns were an anticipation of the Vlacho-Bulgarian empire of later days. It is noteworthy that Nicephorus distinguishes Baian and *Kampagnos*.

tion against Sabin. The possession of these hostages rendered the Bulgarians desirous of peace,¹ but Constantine apparently declined at first, and made an ineffectual expedition against their country, which they were able to protect by occupying in good time the passes of Mount Haemus. After this (762) the Emperor consented to grant an audience to Baian and his bolyars, whom he received in the presence of Sabin, and, having reproached them for their rebellious behaviour, made a treaty with them.

Thrace suffered not only from the inroads of the northern kingdom, but also from the pillaging expeditions of independent Slaves and the brigandage of mountain outlaws. About this time Constantine captured a chief of the Slovene tribe of the Severs, nominally dependent on Bulgaria, who had inflicted many evils on Thrace.² He also captured Christianus, an apostate Christian, who had "magarised" or turned Mohammedan and commanded a band of scamars. I have already mentioned the horrible punishment which this man suffered.³

We hear not what became of Baian, but he was succeeded by Omar, who represented the interests of Sabin, and was opposed by Toktu, Baian's brother.⁴ Constantine invaded Bulgaria to suppress Toktu, who, supported by the majority of the Bulgarians, had driven Omar from the land; and, finding the passes undefended, he advanced as far as the river Tundža,⁵ plundering the villages. In the woods on the banks of the Danube, Toktu was captured and slain. The Roman invasion wrought terrible mischief to Bulgaria, which, as is specially stated, offered a spectacle of devastated fields and burnt hamlets.

Constantine followed up this success by organising another expedition on a larger scale in the following year. Two thousand six hundred transport ships were prepared; troops were assembled from their various stations for a simultaneous attack

¹ These details are narrated by Nicephorus, who places these events in the first indiction, that is, according to the official reckoning of the time, 6254 A.M. (=761-762). Theophanes, on the other hand, places them in 6256 (=764). I prefer to follow Nicephorus; and place the expedition of Constantine in the third indiction, as noted by Nicephorus, identifying it with the expedition noted by Theophanes under 6256.

² Theoph. 6256 A.M. τὸν Σεβέρων ἀρχοντα Σκλαβούνον (so de Boor).

³ *Ib.* See above, p. 422.

⁴ Nicephorus calls Toktos Baian's brother, and immediately afterwards speaks of Toktos and Baian's brother as two distinct persons. The position of Omar, as Sabin's representative, is not clear. He is mentioned as reigning forty days in the Slavonic list of Bulgarian monarchs.

⁵ De Boor, however (with Anastasius), reads ἕως τοῦ Τζίκας instead of ἕως Τούτζας.

on Bulgaria by land and by sea. But a north wind blew hard and wrecked the ships as they were sailing to Anchialus. The crews were drowned, and by the Emperor's orders the bodies were fished up with hooks and received christian burial (765).

Before Constantine's next Bulgarian expedition King Telerig¹ had ascended the throne, and his measures for the defence of his kingdom were so efficient that in the year 773 Constantine, who had arrived with a land army and a naval armament,² abandoned the idea of hostilities and concluded a written treaty, each party undertaking not to attack the other.³ This was in May or June. In October of the same year Constantine, who had friends and emissaries⁴ in Telerig's dominions, was informed by them that the king was sending an army of twelve thousand men to enslave the Slavonic land of Berzetia⁵ and remove the inhabitants to Bulgaria. Promptness and secrecy were necessary to anticipate this invasion; and, as Bulgarian ambassadors were then present at Constantinople, the Emperor pretended that the preparations which he set on foot were for war against the Saracens. To keep up this pretence he caused some troops to cross over to Asia; but as soon as the ambassadors had departed he assembled in Thrace an army of eighty thousand, consisting of garrison soldiers collected from all the themes, of the Thracian regiments, and of the Optimati who were settled in Pontus. At Lithosoria he completely surprised the unsuspecting army of the enemy, gained a great victory, and returned with abundant booty.⁶ In 774 he again embarked a large squadron of cavalry, but at Mesembria the ships were wellnigh wrecked by a storm and the expedition returned without having effected its object.

The success that generally attended Constantine in his

¹ Theophanes (6266 A.M.), Τελέριγος; also called Tzerig.

² Theophanes mentions 'Ρούσια χελάνδια, and Finlay notes the passage as containing the first mention of the Russians in Byzantine history (ii. 87). But de Boor, though he prints 'Ρούσια sic, takes ρούσια χ. in his index as red boats.

³ The Bulgarians sent to Constantine a bolyar (βουλάρ) καὶ Τζιγάτον (so de Boor). It seems to me probable that this word should be written with a small initial, as its collocation with βουλάρ demands and as one MS. confirms. I take it for a Bulgarian word meaning "warrior," and identical with the

Tartar *djiguit*, used by Circassians and Cossacks.

⁴ τῶν κρυπτῶν φίλων αὐτοῦ (Theoph.)

⁵ Βερζετία, in Macedonia. The Berzétai took part in the siege of Salonica in 676. At the present time Brzaci or Brsjaci live in Macedonia about Prilép, Veles, Bitol, and in the district of Tikveš (Jiriček, p. 119).

⁶ October, twelfth indiction, but the preceding May was also in twelfth indiction, as one indiction was spread over two years (see p. 423). Thus the date of the campaign is end of 773, or beginning of 6266 A.M. The dates in Finlay and Jiriček require correction.

Bulgarian campaigns was greatly promoted by the presence of his agents in Bulgaria, who, keeping him well informed concerning the state of the country and the intentions of the monarch, enabled him to seize favourable opportunities. Telerig knew this, and, in order to identify the traitors, had recourse to a stratagem. He wrote to Constantine announcing his intention of fleeing from his realm and taking refuge in the Roman Empire, and asked him to advise him touching persons to whom he might most wisely confide his scheme. Constantine was taken in by the guile and sent to Telerig the names of his friends, whom Telerig immediately put to death.

In August 775 the Emperor, indefatigable in his hostilities against Bulgaria, headed an army and marched northward once more, but, seized with an inflammation in his legs, he was obliged to return to Arcadiopolis, whence he was brought to Selymbria,¹ and a few days later died in the vessel that was conveying him to Constantinople.

In the reign of his successor Leo IV, Telerig carried out in earnest the intention which he had falsely professed to Constantine and fled from his kingdom to the Roman Emperor, at whose court he was baptized, created a Patrician, and married to a Roman princess. Cardam succeeded Telerig, and in his reign the Romans were on the whole unsuccessful. The general of Thrace was surprised and his army routed in the neighbourhood of the Strymon (788).² Two or three years later Constantine VI led a fruitless expedition against Bulgaria; the Romans and the Bulgarians fled from each other in mutual terror (April 791).

The second expedition of Constantine VI, in July 792, was attended with a calamitous defeat. Cardam with all his forces advanced to meet him, and the fair presages of false prophets induced the Emperor to give battle at a disadvantage. The Romans were utterly routed and left some of their most able officers on the field,³ among whom was the veteran Michael Lachanodrakon, the beloved of Constantine V. The Emperor made good his escape, but the disaster almost cost him his throne, as it led to a revolt in the army.

¹ He sailed from Selymbria 13th of September, fourteenth indiction = 775.

² The general's name was Philetos. The date falls between 1st September

788 and 1st September 789.

³ Bardas, a patrician; Nicetas and Theognostos, stratêgoi; Stephanus, a protospathar, and others are named as having fallen.

The next campaign took place in 796. Cardam sent a message to the Emperor demanding a donation of money, and threatening, in case the demand were refused, to lay waste Thrace up to the Golden Gate. The Emperor sent him back horse-dung rolled up in a napkin, with this message: "I send you the tribute that is meet for you. You are an old man, and as I don't wish you to tire yourself by coming so far, I shall go to the fort of Marcellon. God will decide the result." The peratic themes were collected for this expedition, but Cardam fled without hazarding an engagement. Here we take leave of the Bulgarian kingdom, on the eve of the accession of one of its most warlike and savage monarchs, the famous Crumn, and of the catastrophe of the Roman Emperor Nicephorus I, who was slain in battle and whose skull was used as a goblet in the palace of Peristhlaba or of Varna.

By the end of the eighth century, as we have seen, the Bulgarian kingdom had not advanced beyond its original frontiers; but, on the other hand, the Slovenes had pressed southwards in great numbers, had Slavised the country districts in northern Greece and the Peloponnesus, and had probably increased in strength in the regions of Illyricum and Macedonia, which they had occupied before. This Slavonic movement really prepared the way for the extension of the Bulgarian power in a south-western direction, and before the end of the ninth century the southern boundary of the kingdom was the same as the northern boundary of modern Greece. The first step in this direction was the capture of Sofia, which took place in 809; but this lies beyond the limits of the present work.

I should not omit to mention that in the eighth century the northern parts of the Aegean Sea were rendered unsafe by the bands of Slavonian pirates who infested it. These pirates belonged to "the Sclavinias," that is, Macedonia and Thessaly. In the year 768 they carried off into bondage no less than two thousand five hundred inhabitants of Tenedos, Imbros, and Samothrace, and Constantine ransomed the captives by silken robes.¹ "No act of his reign," says Finlay, "shows so much real greatness of mind as this," because to make terms with pirates was for an Emperor to lower his dignity.

¹ Nic. p. 76; in the seventh indiction, i.e. 767-768.